

"Hits the ground running and doesn't let up." The Hollywood Reporter

# BATMAN™ DETECTIVE COMICS™

## MYTHOLOGY



PETER J. TOMASI • DOUG MAHNKE









# **BATMAN DETECTIVE COMICS**

**VOL. 1:  
MYTHOLOGY**

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**BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER**









**A** FAMILY KNOWN  
FOR ITS LEGACY  
OF GIVING...



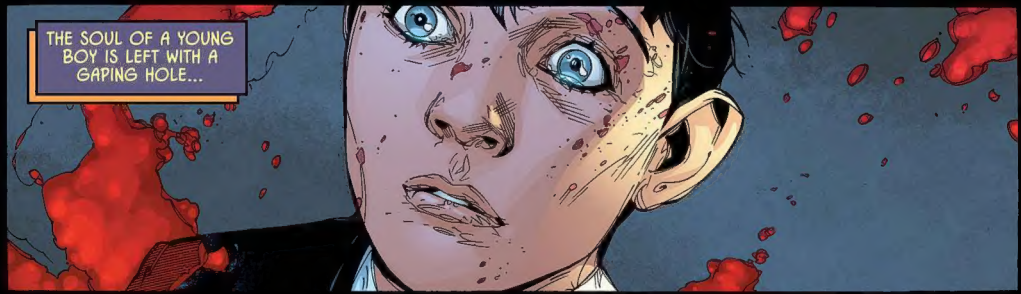
A CITY TEETERING ON  
THE EDGE OF CHAOS,  
KNOWN FOR TAKING...



THIRTY CENTS WORTH  
OF LEAD STEALING  
INNOCENTS' LIVES...



THE SOUL OF A YOUNG  
BOY IS LEFT WITH A  
GAPING HOLE...



A BEATEN AND BLOODED  
YOUNG MAN IS SAVED BY  
A VOW AND A BELL...





**A** LIGHTED SYMBOL BURNS.

A DARK KNIGHT  
HEEDS THE CALL.



STORY AND WORDS **PETER J. TOMASI**  
PENCILLER **DOUG MAHNKE**

INKER **JAIME MENDOZA** • COLORIST **DAVID BARON** • LETTERER **ROB LEIGH**  
COVER **MAHNKE, MENDOZA, BARON**  
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EDITOR **CHRIS CONROY** • GROUP EDITOR **JAMIE S. RICH**







T · H · O · L · O · F · Y







THE  
WAYNES...



...THEY WERE  
MY FIRST.

FIRST  
WHAT?

DOUBLE  
MURDER.

HHN.



"MINE, TOO,"  
I WANT TO  
SCREAM OUT...

...BUT INSTEAD  
I BITE DOWN SO  
HARD I FEEL LIKE  
MY JAW'S GOING  
TO SNAP.



THERE THEY ARE.

STARING BACK AT ME  
THROUGH THE YEARS.

AS OLD AS I AM NOW--  
MY MOTHER--MY FATHER--  
THEIR WHOLE LIVES  
AHEAD OF THEM...

...EXCEPT FOR  
ONE GLARING,  
IRREFUTABLE FACT.

THESE PEOPLE ARE  
OBVIOUSLY NOT  
MY PARENTS.

THEY'VE BEEN MADE TO  
LOOK EXACTLY LIKE THEM  
ON THIS DARK DAY.





I'LL HAVE 'EM OUT IN A FEW, COMMISH.

SOONER THAN LATER, PLEASE.

WHO CALLED IT IN?

AQUARIUM EMPLOYEE WHO FEEDS THE DOLPHINS.



WHAT'S THAT?

A TIME SAVER...

KLIK K



...FOR IMPATIENT PEOPLE.

BE DEEP

A FEW STEPS BACK WOULD BE PRUDENT.

YEAH...



...THAT'S WHAT I FIGURED.

SPARRSH





FER  
GOD'S  
SAKE...

SPLASH



...THESE  
POOR FOLKS ARE  
SPITTIN' IMAGES  
OF THE WAYNES.

YES...

...YES,  
THEY ARE.



AND IF MY PATROLMAN MEMORY  
SERVES ME RIGHT, THEY'RE WEARING  
THE SAME CLOTHES THEY WORE  
THE NIGHT OF THE--

EXACT BRANDS,  
NAIL POLISH, SHOES,  
SOCKS, FUR, WATCHES...  
PEARLS...



...EVEN REPLICAS OF  
THEIR WEDDING  
RINGS.

I'VE GOT  
DETECTIVE CORRIGAN  
SCANNING THE  
AQUARIUM'S SECURITY  
TAPES FOR ANY  
SIGN OF--

I'M SURE  
HE WON'T FIND  
ANYTHING.

MATTER OF  
FACT, I BET  
THEY'VE BEEN  
ERASED OR  
TAKEN.



WHOEVER KILLED THESE INNOCENT PEOPLE MADE SURE THEY HAD THE SAME FOUNDATIONAL BONE STRUCTURE AND ETHNICITY AS MY... MARTHA AND THOMAS WAYNE...

...THE PLASTIC SURGERY'S BEYOND REPROACH...

...AS ARE THEIR MORTAL WOUNDS.



BY THE LOOKS OF IT, THE BULLET HOLES DON'T EVEN DEVIATE A CENTIMETER FROM THE ORIGINAL ENTRY POINTS.

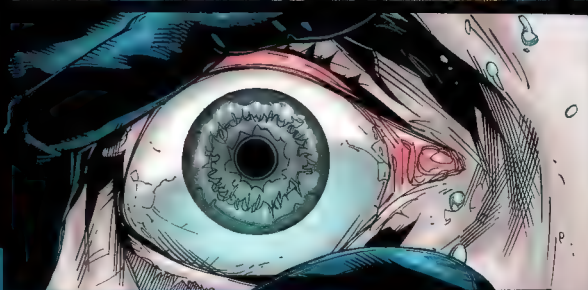
A KILLER WHO'S A STICKLER FOR DETAILS, GREAT.

TANK'S EMPTY. CLEAN AS A WHISTLE. NO SIGN OF ANY OTHER FOREIGN MATTER.



DIDN'T EXPECT THERE TO...

HMM?

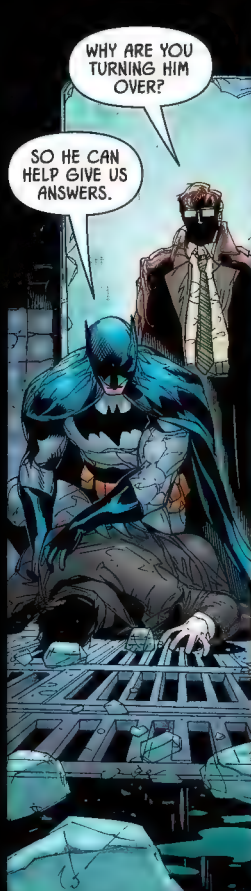


THE WHITES OF THIS VICTIM'S EYES ARE NORMAL.

NO EVIDENCE OF BROKEN BLOOD CAPILLARIES FROM THE STRAIN OF DROWNING.







WHY ARE YOU TURNING HIM OVER?

SO HE CAN HELP GIVE US ANSWERS.



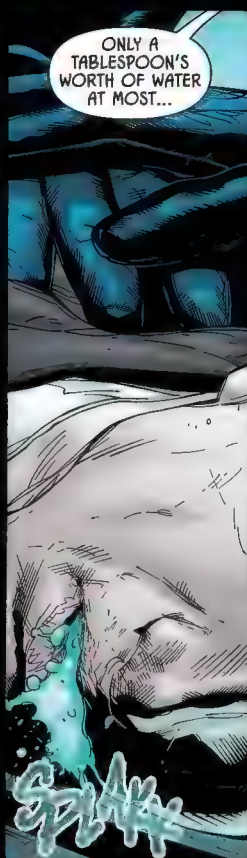
ENOUGH PRESSURE PLACED ON THE LUNGS...

THE TIME IT TOOK TO MATCH THE WAYNES IN EVERY WAY, ONLY TO BE SHOT AND DUMPED LIKE THIS...

...THE SUFFERING THESE POOR PEOPLE WERE PUT THROUGH--



--IS WHAT WILL LET THEM SPEAK FROM THE GRAVE.



ONLY A TABLESPOON'S WORTH OF WATER AT MOST...



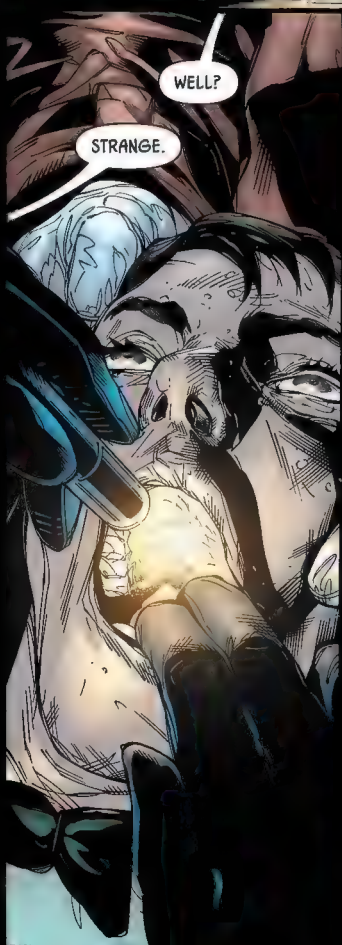
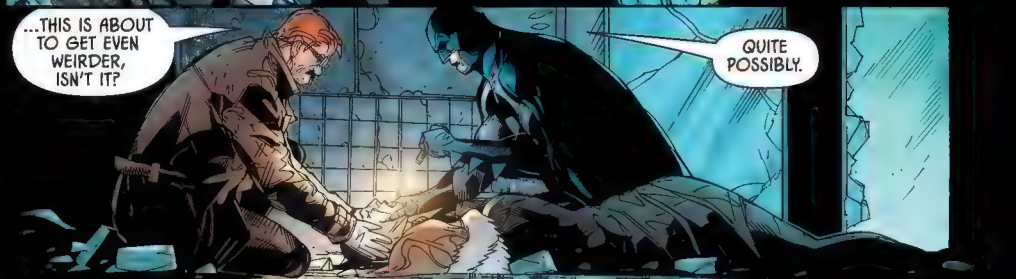
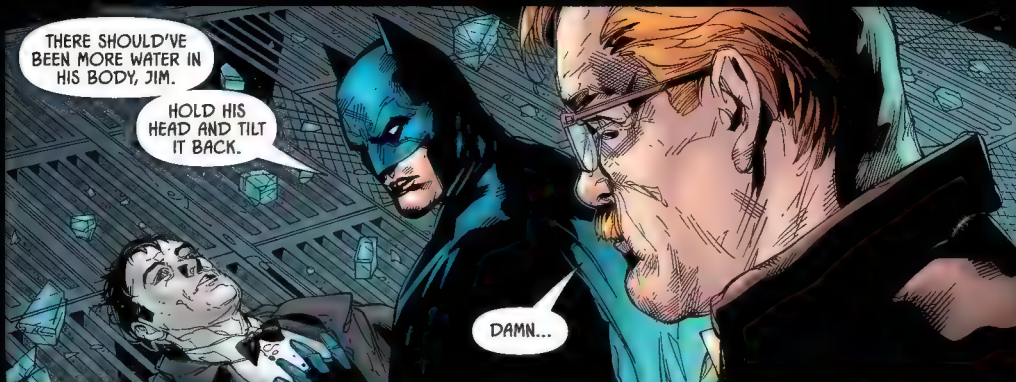
POKING UP INSIDE HIS JACKET.

MOVIE PROGRAM FROM THAT NIGHT.

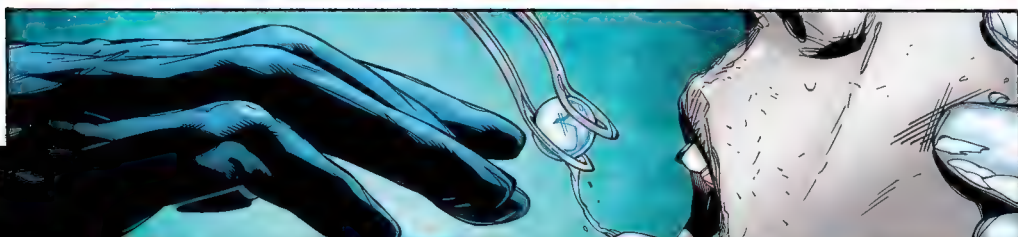


A PERFECT FACSIMILE.









A PEARL.

BELONGING TO  
THE STRING ON...THIS  
MARTHA WAYNE'S TORN  
NECKLACE.

I'M SURE THERE'S  
ONE IN *HER* MOUTH,  
TOO.

SO THE  
WATER AND  
THE PEARL  
DIDN'T DO  
THEM IN.

NO. BOTH  
WERE ADMINISTERED  
POSTMORTEM.

THIS COUPLE WAS  
MURDERED *ELSEWHERE*,  
COMMISSIONER...

BECAUSE IT'S THE  
**ANNIVERSARY**  
OF THEIR DEATH  
OUTSIDE THE  
MONARCH  
THEATER.

WHY MADE UP  
TO LOOK LIKE THE  
WAYNES...

...WHY  
TODAY?



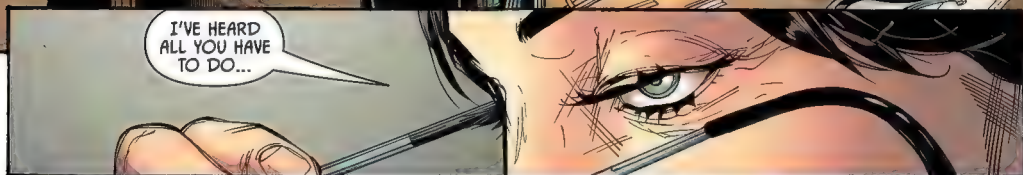
'NIGHT,  
MR. GIORDANO.

SEE YOU  
TOMORROW.

HATE TO BREAK IT TO  
YOU, BUT IT ALREADY  
IS TOMORROW.

HEAD HOME  
AND GET SOME  
SLEEP.

I'LL GIVE  
IT A TRY.



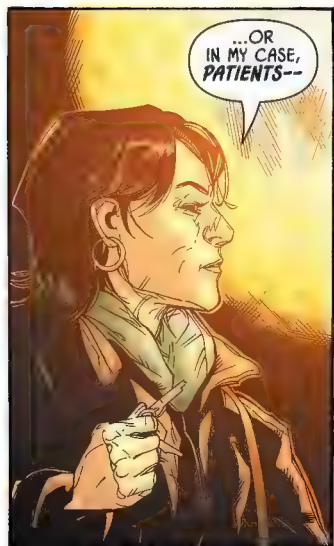
I'VE HEARD  
ALL YOU HAVE  
TO DO...



...IS CLOSE  
YOUR  
EYES...



...AND  
COUNT  
SHEEP...



...OR  
IN MY CASE,  
PATIENTS--





OMIGOD.

OPEN  
OPEN  
OPEN...

THIS CAN'T  
BE--

SKAASH

WHEREISIT  
WHEREISIT  
WHEREISIT

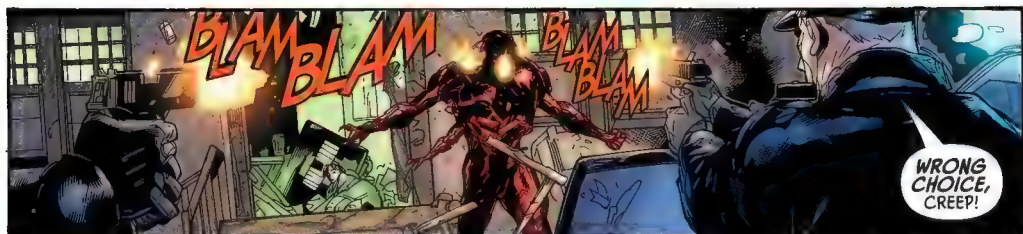
GNFF





STEP AWAY FROM  
THE WOMAN AND RAISE  
YOUR HANDS!

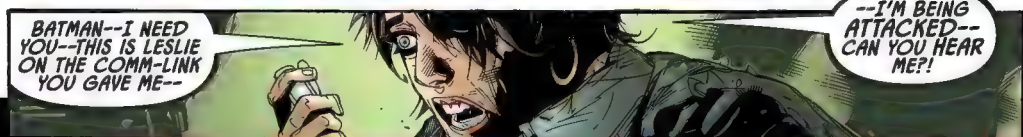
RIGHT NOW  
OR WE'LL OPEN  
FIRE!



**BLAM  
BLAM**

**BLAM  
BLAM**

WRONG  
CHOICE,  
CREEP!



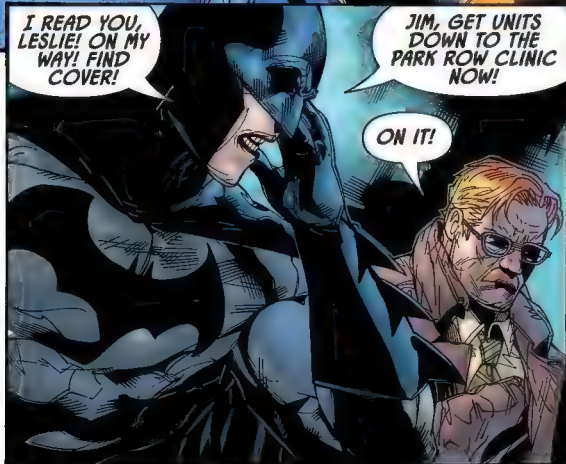
BATMAN--I NEED  
YOU--THIS IS LESLIE  
ON THE COMM-LINK  
YOU GAVE ME--

--I'M BEING  
ATTACKED--  
CAN YOU HEAR  
ME?!



LOOK  
OUT!

**RUN!**



I READ YOU,  
LESLIE! ON MY  
WAY! FIND  
COVER!

JIM, GET UNITS  
DOWN TO THE  
PARK ROW CLINIC  
NOW!

ON IT!

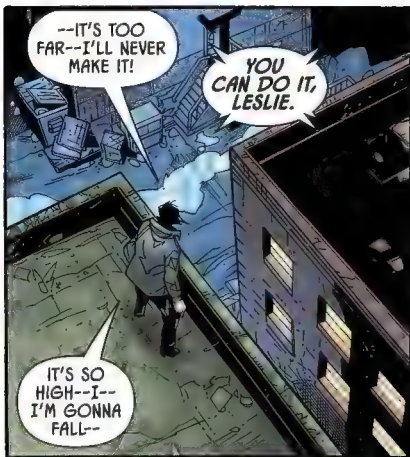


KEEP YOUR  
COMM-LINK ON,  
I'M TRACKING  
YOU.

THIS THING--  
BULLETS AREN'T  
STOPPING IT--  
IT'S HUGE--TOSsing  
CARS AROUND  
LIKE TOYS!







--IT'S TOO FAR--I'LL NEVER MAKE IT!

YOU CAN DO IT, LESLIE.

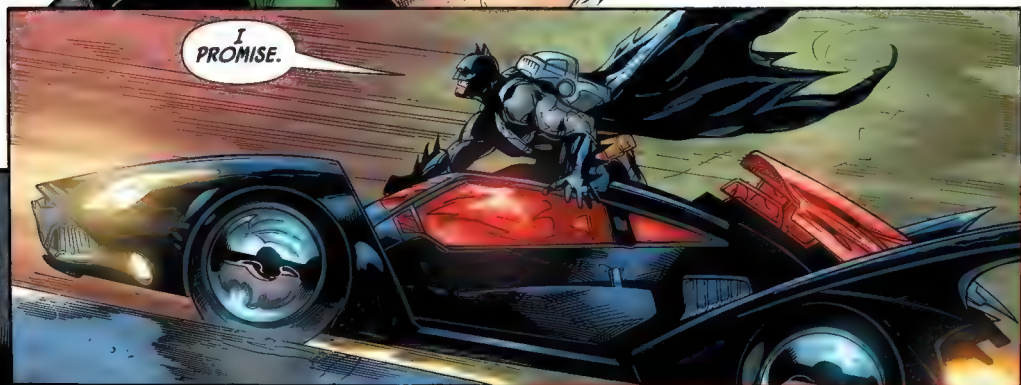
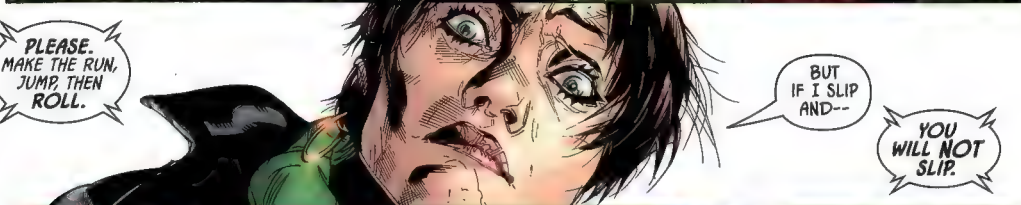
IT'S SO HIGH--I-- I'M GONNA FALL--



PLEASE. MAKE THE RUN, JUMP, THEN ROLL.

BUT IF I SLIP AND--

YOU WILL NOT SLIP.



I PROMISE.



...TOO LATE, BRUCE...

...IT'S ON THE CLINIC ROOF WITH ME...

KLANG





I'M  
A BLOCK  
AWAY!

MAKE THE  
JUMP, LESLIE--  
PLEASE!

IT'S  
TURNED AWAY,  
BRUCE...

...IT'S  
LOOKING  
DOWN AT THE  
STREET...

RIGHT IN  
THE DIRECTION  
I NEED IT TO.

I'VE  
GOT ITS  
ATTENTION.

...WAIT...  
IT HAD YOUR  
SIGNAL LIGHT...  
IT'S NOT AFTER  
ME...

...IT WANTS  
YOU,  
BRUCE...

...THIS DARK  
CREATURE WANTS  
TO KILL YOU...

LESLIE--  
FOR GOD'S SAKE--  
GET OFF THAT ROOF  
NOW!

YOU'RE NOT  
TAKING THE ONLY  
HOPE THIS CITY  
HAS!

LEAVE  
THE BOY  
ALONE!

SMUNK!



THAT'S IT--  
ISN'T IT?!



I WAS THE  
BAIT!



YOU WANTED  
BATMAN...



...WELL,  
BE CAREFUL WHAT  
YOU WISH FOR, YOU  
VILE CREATURE...

HSSSSSS

GET YOUR  
HANDS OFF  
HER!

WRAMMMMM











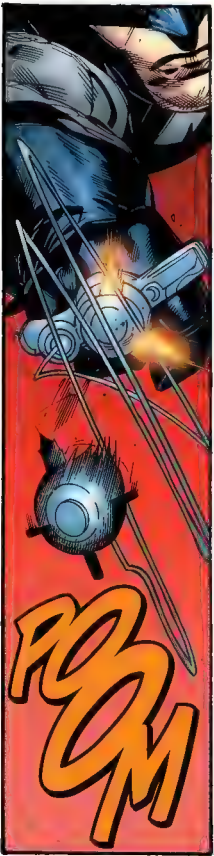
NOOO!

AAAGHH!



GO LIMP, LESLIE!

AAAAHHH!



POOM



HOLD TIGHT--I'M TUCKING IN TO TAKE THE BRUNT OF--



SKAAASH





...I DON'T  
THINK SO AT  
AAHAHAHAHAHA!



HAHAHAHAHAHA!

# RING THEM BELLS

ALFRED!

I'VE GOT  
LESLIE THOMPkins IN  
MY ARMS--SHE'S BEEN  
EXPOSED TO THE  
JOKER'S LAUGHING  
GAS!

HAVE A  
ROUND OF THE  
ANTITOXIN READY  
TO GO!

...MY FACE...  
BRUCE...

...HAHAHA...

...HURTS  
SO MUCH...

...LIKE MY  
MOUTH...

...HAHAHA...

...IS  
SPLITTING IN  
TWO...

STORY AND WORDS: PETER J. TOMASI • PENCILLER: DOUG MAHNKE  
INKER: JAIME MENDOZA • COLORIST: DAVID BARON • LETTERER: ROB LEIGH  
COVER: MAHNKE, MENDOZA, BARON • ASST. EDITOR: DAVE WIELGOSZ  
EDITOR: CHRIS CONROY • GROUP EDITOR: JAMIE S. RICH



HOLD ON,  
EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE  
ALL RIGHT ONCE WE GET  
BACK TO THE--

...HAHA...

...SO MUCH  
I WANT TO SAY,  
BRUCE...

...HAHA...

...NEVER  
ENOUGH  
TIME...

...THAT  
HORRIBLE NIGHT  
FEELS LIKE ONLY  
YESTERDAY...

...HAHAHA...

...YOU WERE  
EIGHT YEARS OLD...  
HOLDING MY  
HAND...

SAVE YOUR  
STRENGTH, LESLIE,  
PLEASE.

I'M NINE  
MINUTES OUT,  
ALFRED.

STATUS?

SYNTHESIZING SEVERAL  
DIFFERENT TOXINS AS  
WE SPEAK.

THEY  
WILL BE  
READY.

...HAHAHA...

...LITTLE BOY  
IN SO MUCH PAIN...  
ALWAYS WANTED TO  
BE ALONE...

...PUSHED  
BACK AT ME  
SO HARD...

AND YOU  
NEVER GAVE  
AN INCH.

YOU AND  
ALFRED KEPT  
DRAGGING ME  
OUTSIDE...

...FORCING  
ME TO SEE THAT  
LIFE GOES  
ON...

...THE  
GOOD AND  
THE BAD.

...HAHAHA...

...I DON'T  
WANT TO DIE  
TODAY...

...SO MUCH  
MORE WORK  
TO DO...

AND YOU'RE  
GOING TO  
KEEP DOING IT,  
I PROMISE.





WE'RE  
GOING TO KEEP  
MAKING THIS  
CITY BETTER  
TOGETHER.



...JUST LIKE...  
...HAHAHA...  
...ALWAYS...



ABSOLUTELY--  
JUST LIKE  
ALWAYS.



HAHAHAHA



ALFRED--  
INOCULATION WITH  
FIRST ANTITOXIN--  
NOW!

HAHAHAHAHAHAHA





THIS IS  
THE **THIRD**  
INOCULATION  
VARIATION...

...WHAT YOU  
DID FOR THIS  
CITY--

HAHAHAHAHA

--NOT JUST AS  
"BATMAN"--

HAHAHA

--BUT AS  
BRUCE WAYNE--

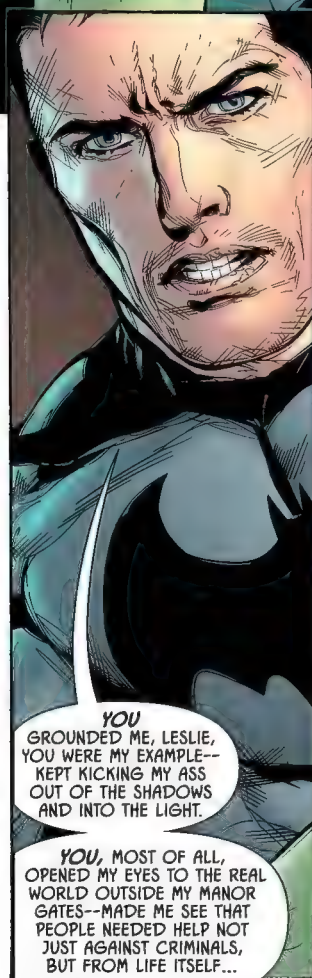
HAHAHA...

WHY  
AREN'T THEY  
WORKING,  
DAMN IT?!

...ALL THE  
LIVES YOU  
SAVED--

HAHAHAHA

--THE  
LIVES YOU  
BETTERED--



YOU  
GROUNDED ME, LESLIE,  
YOU WERE MY EXAMPLE--  
KEPT KICKING MY ASS  
OUT OF THE SHADOWS  
AND INTO THE LIGHT.

YOU, MOST OF ALL,  
OPENED MY EYES TO THE REAL  
WORLD OUTSIDE MY MANOR  
GATES--MADE ME SEE THAT  
PEOPLE NEEDED HELP NOT  
JUST AGAINST CRIMINALS,  
BUT FROM LIFE ITSELF...



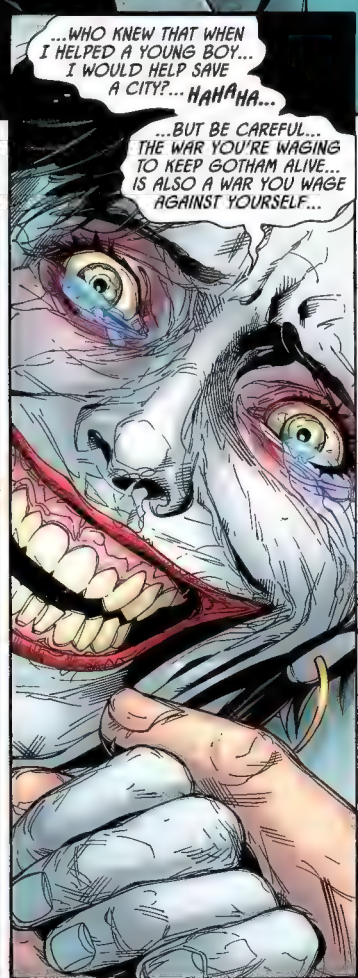
LESLIE IS NOT  
RESPONDING.

SHE'S BEEN  
INFECTED WITH A  
**MUTATED TOXIN**  
VARIATION...NONE  
OF OUR ANTIDOTES  
ARE WORKING.

...HEARING  
YOU SAY  
THAT--

HAHAHA

--MEANS  
THE WORLD  
TO ME...



...WHO KNEW THAT WHEN  
I HELPED A YOUNG BOY...  
I WOULD HELP SAVE  
A CITY?... HAHAHA...

...BUT BE CAREFUL...  
THE WAR YOU'RE WAGING  
TO KEEP GOTHAM ALIVE...  
IS ALSO A WAR YOU WAGE  
AGAINST YOURSELF...







I'M  
NOT  
LOSING  
HER!

CLEAR!

TRAP

YOU  
HEAR ME,  
LESLIE?!

WE STILL  
HAVE MORE  
WORK TO  
DO!

TRAP

THE  
CITY  
NEEDS  
YOU!

I NEED  
YOU!

CLEAR!





C'MON,  
DAMN IT!

DON'T  
GIVE UP!

CHARGING.

CLEAR!

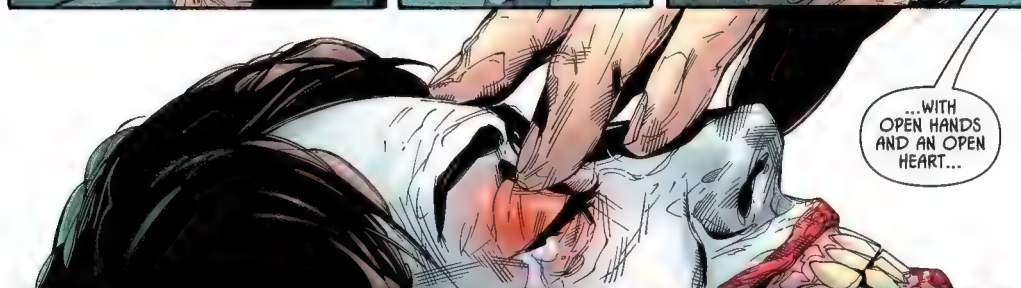
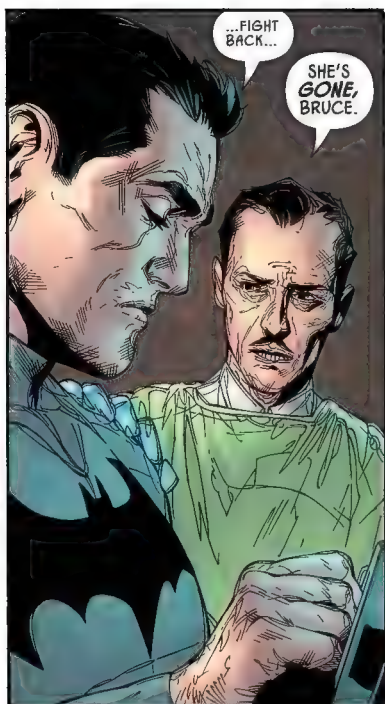
DON'T  
LEAVE US,  
LESLIE!

FIGHT  
BACK...

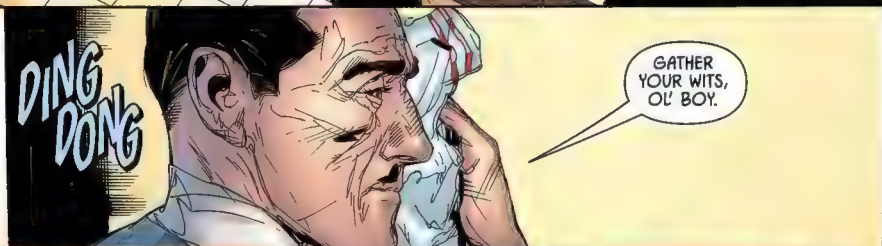
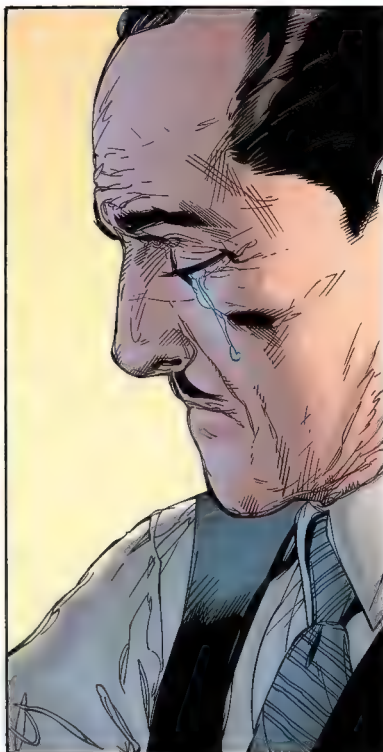
THOMPSONS COURT  
APARTMENTS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
ECO-FRIENDLY













Z





...A...

...A RAPIER...



...WHO...



...ARE...



...YOU?





DING  
DING  
DING



DING  
DING  
DING



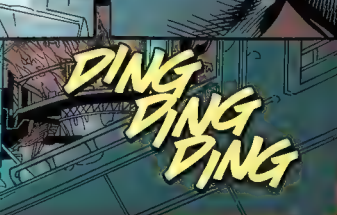
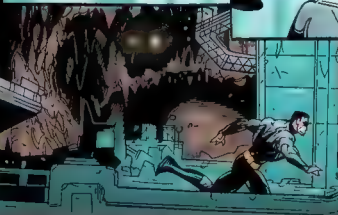
DING  
DING  
DING



DING  
DING  
DING



DING  
DING  
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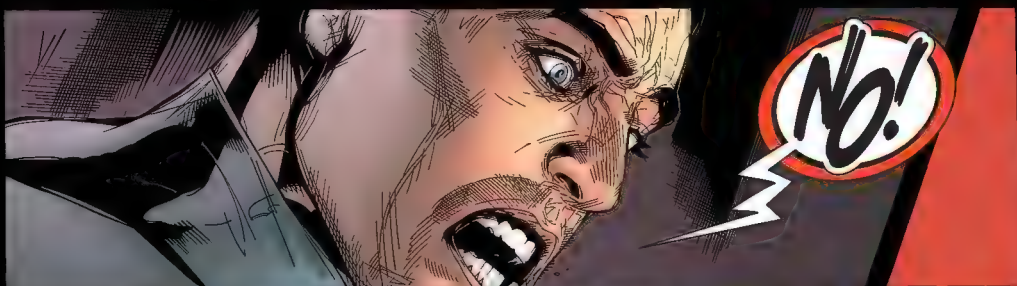


DING  
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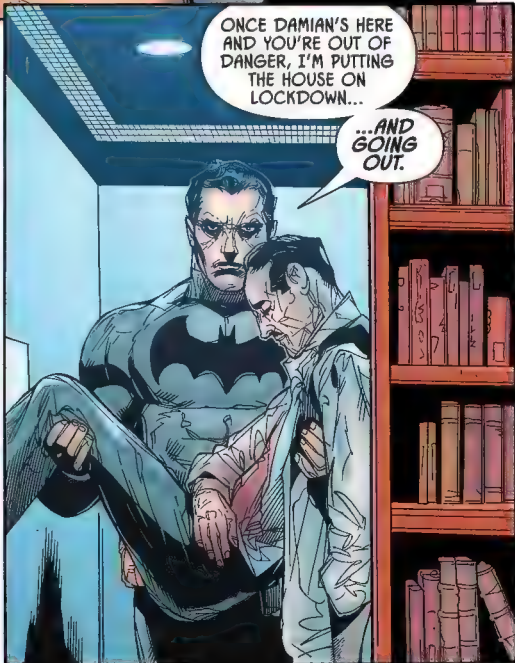
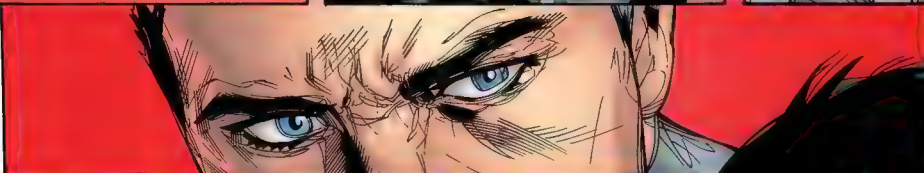
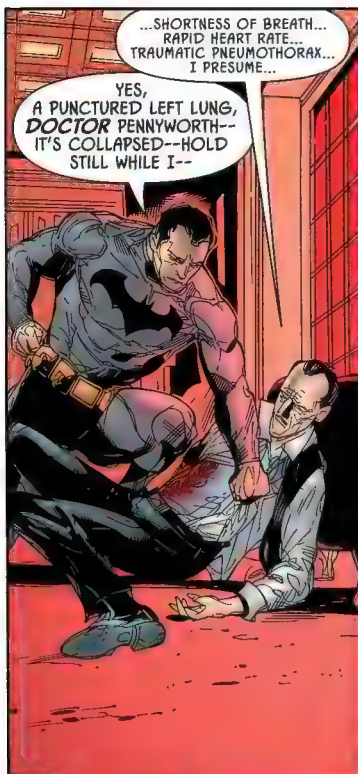


DING  
DING  
DING











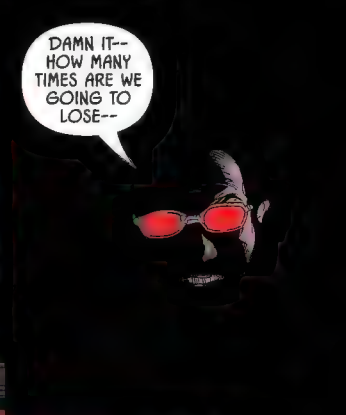


DROWNING IN THE  
STORM OR DROWNING  
IN PAPERWORK.

WHICH  
WILL IT  
BE?



DAMN IT--  
HOW MANY  
TIMES ARE WE  
GOING TO  
LOSE--



I NEED TO  
CONDUCT SOME  
INTERVIEWS.



YAGHH!

THIS IS **HIGHLY**  
UNORTHODOX,  
BATMAN, I DON'T  
SEE HOW IN GOOD  
CONSCIENCE I CAN  
LET YOU--



I WASN'T  
ASKING,  
DR. ARKHAM.





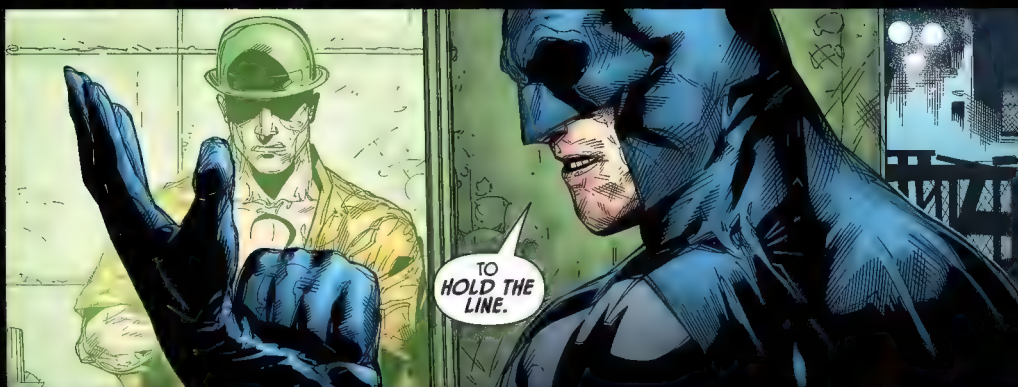
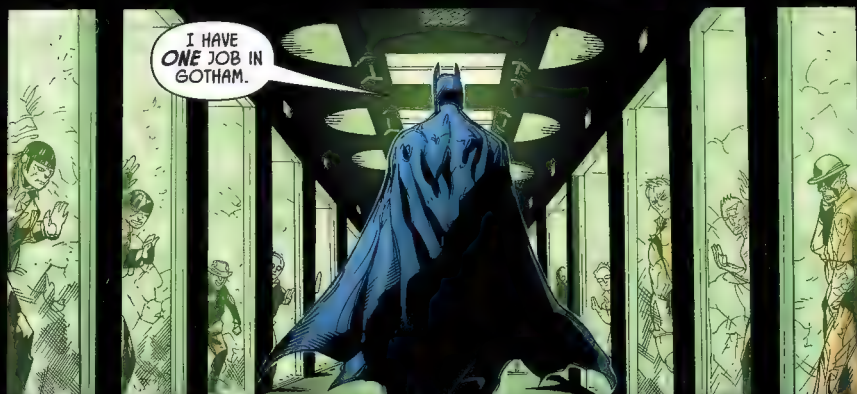




I'M  
HERE LOOKING  
FOR A LITTLE  
ILLUMINATION.



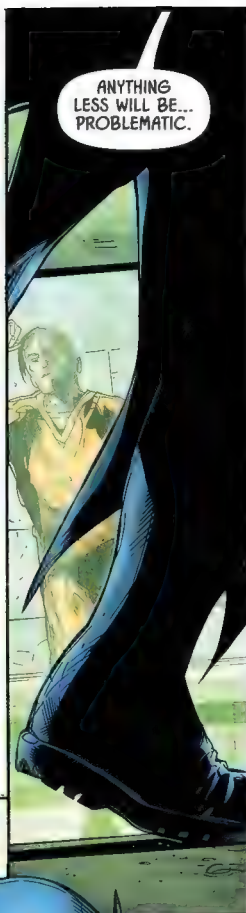








SO,  
COOPERATION  
AND INFORMATION  
ARE OUR WATCHWORDS  
THIS EVENING.



ANYTHING  
LESS WILL BE...  
PROBLEMATIC.



I WANT YOU  
ALL TO THINK OF  
THIS PLACE LIKE A  
CARNIVAL FUNHOUSE  
TONIGHT...



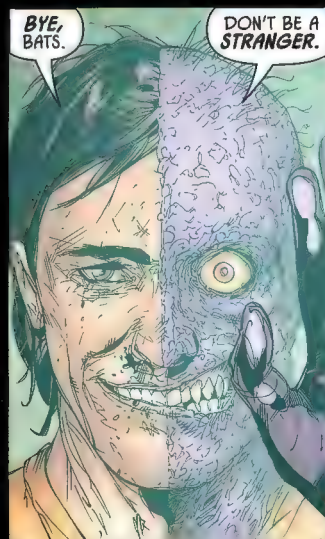
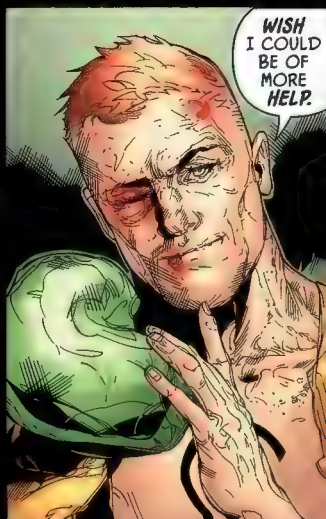
...EXCEPT  
THE ONLY  
MONSTER IN HERE  
WITH YOU...

KLKK

...IS *ME*.







ARKHAM ASYLUM.

DON'T  
WORRY,  
HARVEY.

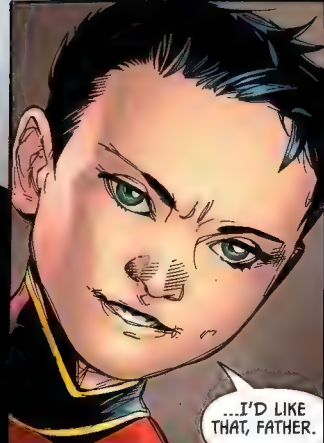
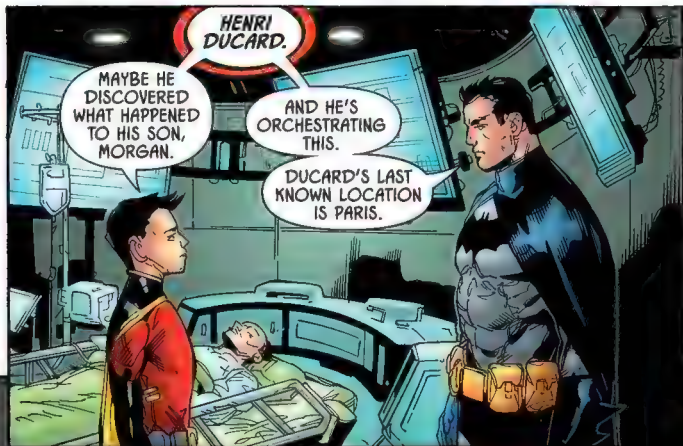
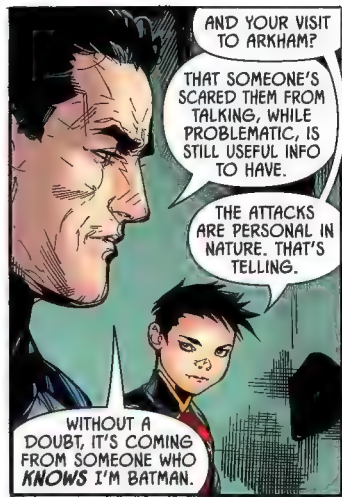
I WON'T.

M · Y · T · H · O · L · O · G · Y

SEE PARIS AND DIE!

STORY AND WORDS PETER J. TOMASI • PENCILLER DOUG MAHNKE  
INKERS JAIME MENDOZA AND MARK IRWIN • COLORIST DAVID BARON • LETTERER ROB LEIGH  
COVER MAHNKE, MENDOZA, BARON • ASST. EDITOR DAVE WIELGOSZ  
EDITOR CHRIS CONROY • GROUP EDITOR JAMIES RICH







# PARIS, FRANCE.

I DON'T  
WASTE TIME.

AS ALFRED ALWAYS  
SAID, A FEW BASIC  
DISGUISES ARE ALL  
YOU NEED.

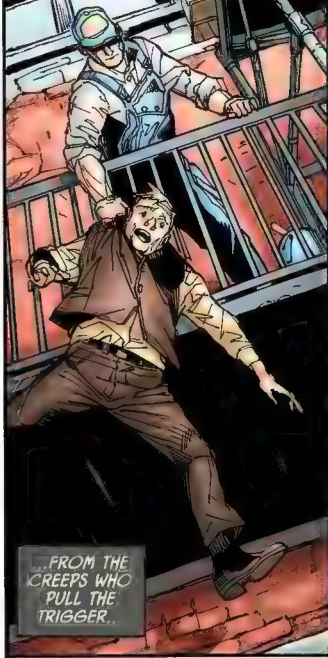
BEST TO START  
LOW ON THE  
TOTEM POLE...



LISTEN IN ON LOCK  
ASSASSINS HAPPY TO  
GET NEW BUSINESS, WITH  
THE "GREAT DUCARD"  
SUDDENLY OUT OF  
THE PICTURE...



...AND KEEP WORKING  
MY WAY UP...

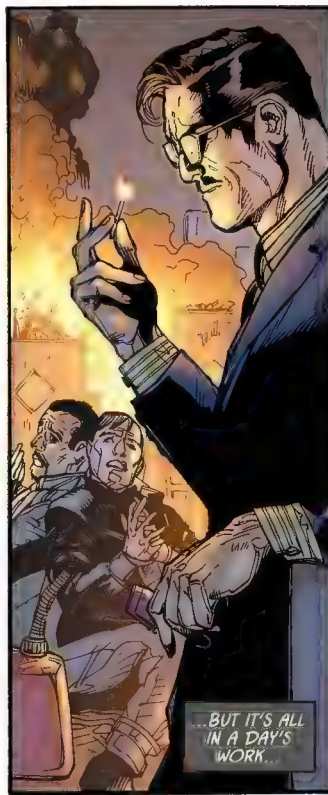


FROM THE  
CREEPS WHO  
PULL THE  
TRIGGER...

...TO THE ONES WHO  
ORDER LIVES TO BE TAKEN  
LIKE ENTREES ON A MENU.



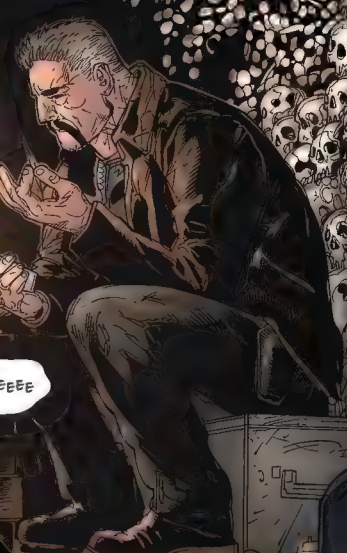
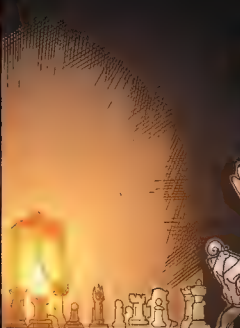
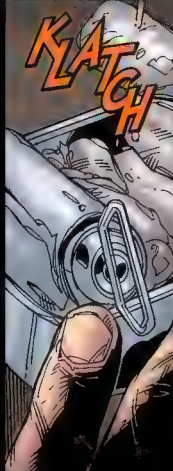
I GET A LITTLE CARRIED  
AWAY IN DIGGING FOR  
SOME FACTS...



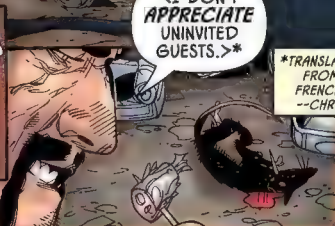
...BUT IT'S ALL  
IN A DAY'S  
WORK...



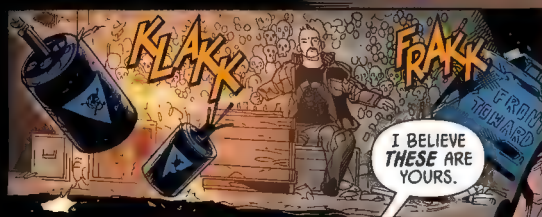
UNTIL I GET A  
BETTER LOCK  
ON DUCARD'S  
WHEREABOUTS.



SQUEEE



\*TRANSLATED  
FROM  
FRENCH.  
--CHRIS







EVENING,  
DUCARD.

NNF!

FRAX

ARMED TO  
THE TEETH AS  
ALWAYS.

BAMM

BAMM  
BAMM  
BAMM

SLAM  
SLAM  
SLAM

KZZX

HOW DID  
YOU FIND ME,  
WAYNE?

ASKS THE  
HUNTER WHO  
TAUGHT ME  
TO HUNT.

I'M ONLY  
GOING TO TELL  
YOU ONCE.

GET THAT  
GUN OUT OF  
MY FACE.



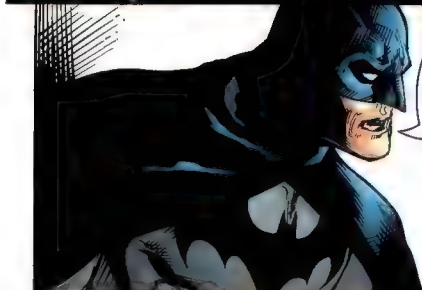


YOUR DISTASTE FOR FIREARMS  
AGAINST YOUR PREY IS STILL  
A...*THING*, HMM?

MY *PREY'S* LEARNED I DON'T  
NEED A GUN TO HURT OR STOP  
THEM.

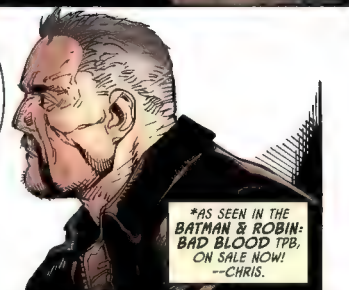


YES, MY SON,  
*MORGAN*, WAS  
QUITE AWARE  
OF THAT.

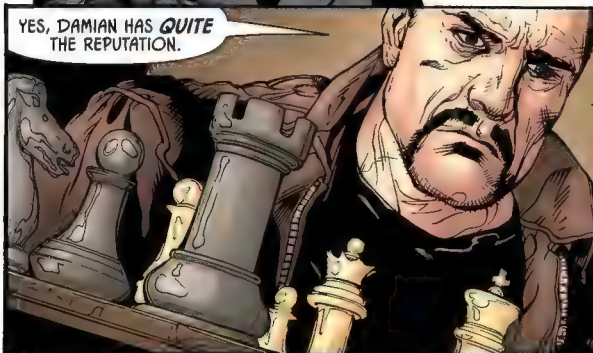


LET'S GET THIS  
STRAIGHT, DUCARD--  
YOU SENT YOUR SON TO KILL  
ME--HE *FAILED*--I THREW  
HIM BACK IN YOUR FACE, ALIVE--  
AND THEN PROBABLY TO PROVE  
TO YOU WHAT A MEAN BASTARD  
HE WAS, HE DECIDED TO  
TRY AGAIN *AND* TAKE  
MY SON.

UNFORTUNATELY,  
AGAINST MY WISHES,  
DAMIAN TOOK HIS  
LIFE.\*



\*AS SEEN IN THE  
BATMAN & ROBIN:  
BAD BLOOD TPB,  
ON SALE NOW!  
--CHRIS.



YES, DAMIAN HAS *QUITE*  
THE REPUTATION.

A BOY OF IRON  
PREPARED TO DO WHAT  
IS NECESSARY.

I HAVE NO  
DOUBT I'D  
LIKE HIM.



BUT YOU KNEW  
THAT ALREADY  
BECAUSE *MORGAN*--  
AS *NOBODY*--  
RECORDED  
EVERYTHING AND  
ASSUMED HE'D BE  
SHOWING YOU HIS  
FINAL VICTORY  
INSTEAD OF  
HIS DEFEAT,  
DIDN'T HE?

YES, I SAT  
AND WATCHED  
THOUSANDS OF MILES  
AWAY, HELPLESS, AS  
YOUR BOY KILLED  
MY ONLY SON ON A  
LIVE FEED.



*MORGAN* LOST,  
YOU WON.

THE BATTLE,  
MIND YOU, NOT  
THE WAR.

SO THAT'S  
WHAT THIS IS--  
A WAR?

YOU'RE ATTACKING  
AND MURDERING  
PEOPLE I CARE ABOUT  
TO AVENGE--

**KLASH!**

DOES *THIS* ANCIENT  
CATACOMB APPEAR TO BE  
A BASE OF OPERATIONS  
TO YOU?!

DO THESE CANS  
OF SPAM SIGNIFY THAT  
MY SNEAK ATTACK ON  
ALL YOU HOLD DEAR  
HAS BEGUN?!

AFTER A FEW CLOSE  
CALLS, I'VE BEEN ON THE  
RUN FOR WEEKS, AND IT'S  
NOW ALL STARTING TO  
MAKE SENSE...

...YOU'RE NOT  
THE ONLY ONE  
HUNTING ME.

I'VE SOMEHOW  
BECOME A TARGET  
**BECAUSE** OF YOU,  
WAYNE, AND YOU'VE  
MOST LIKELY **LED** THEM  
RIGHT TO MY LITTLE  
HOLE IN THE--

MATTER  
OF FACT, IT LOOKS  
LIKE YOU'RE GETTING  
READY TO MAKE A LAST  
STAND DOWN HERE.

--GROUND?

HRMM.





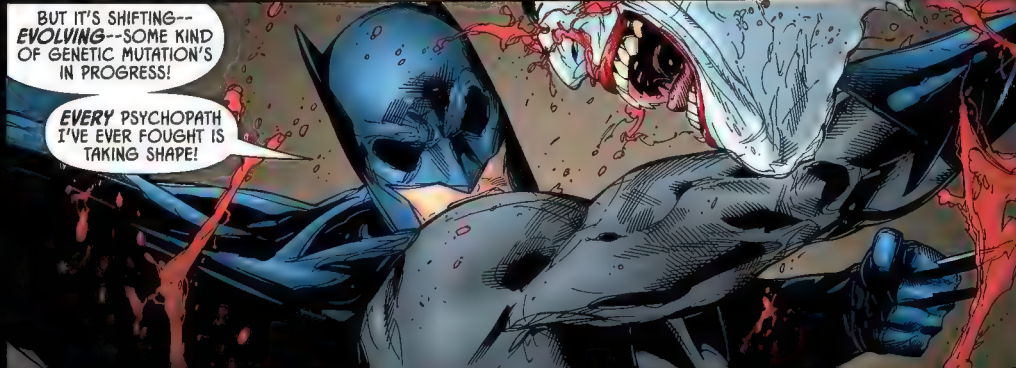




I'VE  
FOUGHT THIS  
THING BEFORE--  
IN GOTHAM!

DON'T EXPECT  
ME TO THANK YOU  
FOR IMPORTING THIS  
ABERRATION TO  
FRANCE!

THE BAT  
THE BAT  
THE BAT



BUT IT'S SHIFTING--  
EVOLVING--SOME KIND  
OF GENETIC MUTATION'S  
IN PROGRESS!

EVERY PSYCHOPATH  
I'VE EVER FOUGHT IS  
TAKING SHAPE!



I DON'T CARE--  
AS LONG AS IT CAN  
DIE, THAT'S GOOD  
ENOUGH FOR ME!

BRATTA BRATTA BRATTA BRA!









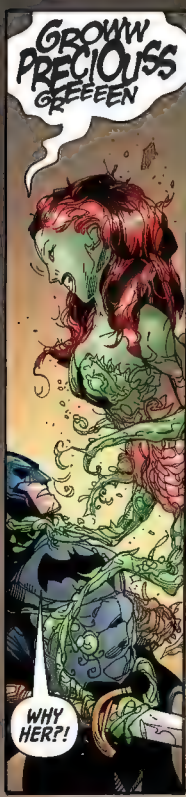
WHO SENT YOU?!

WAUGHH  
LOVE YOU HATE  
YOU KILL  
YOU



SHLKKK

YOU MURDERED  
SOMEONE DEAR  
TO ME!



GROWW  
PRECIOUS  
GREEN

WHY  
HER?!



LIFE IS FEAR  
GREEN IS  
LIFE

WHY DID  
YOU TARGET  
LESLIE AND  
TRY TO KILL  
ALFRED?!

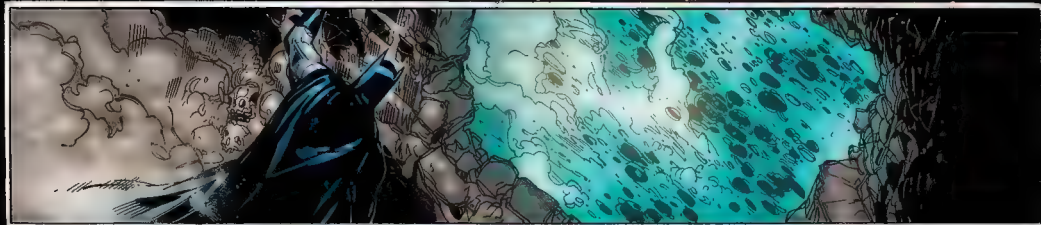


BLAM BLAM BLAM  
BLAM BLAM

YAARGHHH

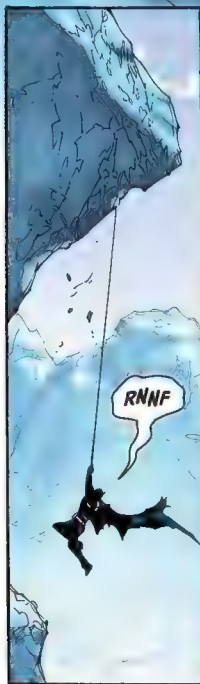
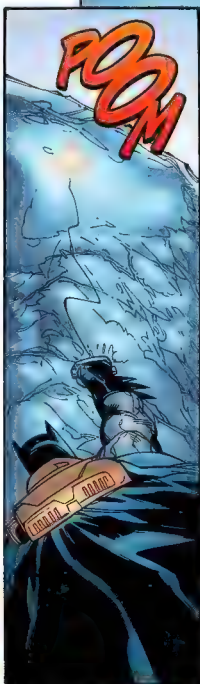
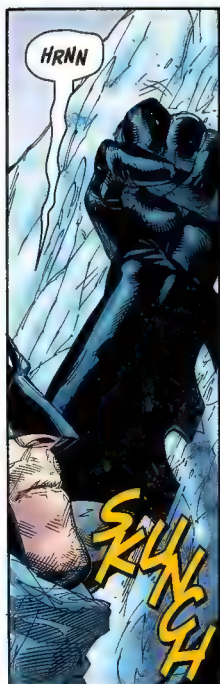
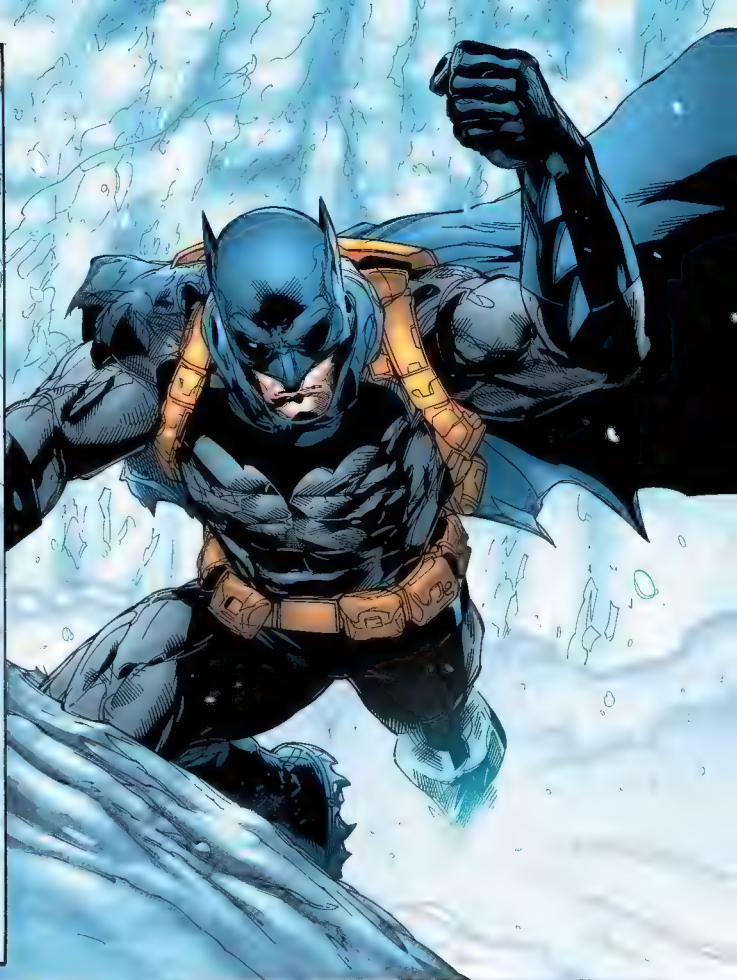
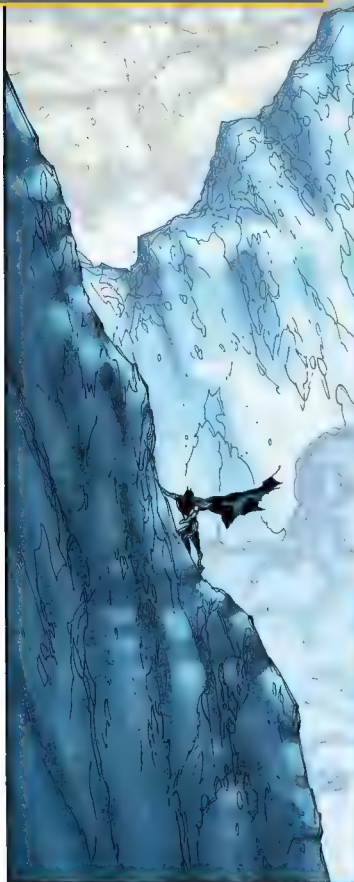
MY  
PUDDIN  
ORAAA







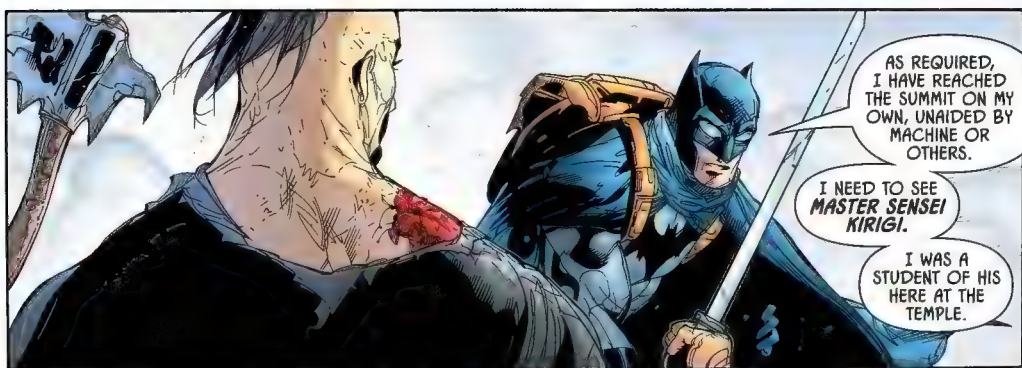
**PREKTU-SAN MOUNTAINS.**  
NORTH KOREA.











AS REQUIRED,  
I HAVE REACHED  
THE SUMMIT ON MY  
OWN, UNAIDED BY  
MACHINE OR  
OTHERS.

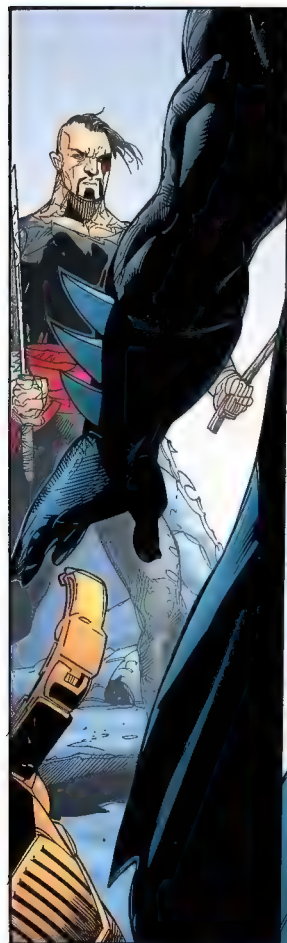
I NEED TO SEE  
**MASTER SENSEI  
KIRIGI.**

I WAS A  
STUDENT OF HIS  
HERE AT THE  
TEMPLE.

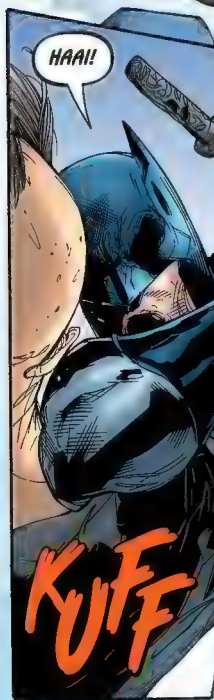


YOU WILL  
NOT SET EYES ON  
SENSEI KIRIGI  
THIS DAY.

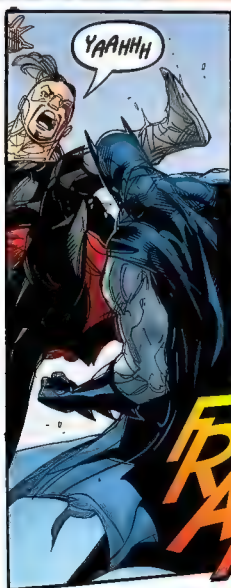
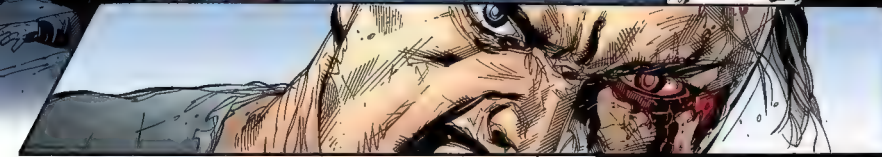
**AND YOU  
WILL NOT  
PASS.**



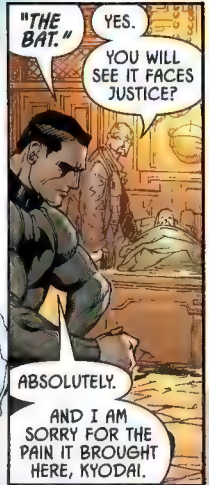
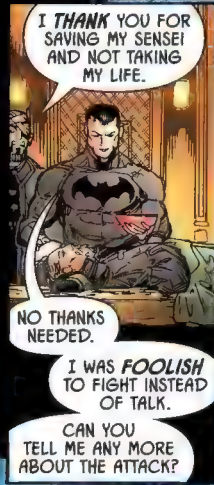
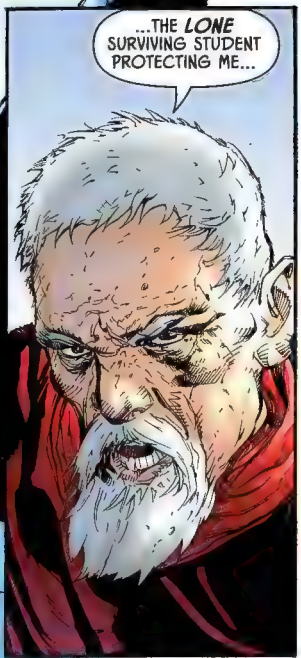












...READY TO TAKE ME FROM TEN DEGREES BELOW ZERO...



GILA, NEW MEXICO.

TO 95 DEGREE  
AT NIGHT

A HALO JUMP WAS THE ONLY WAY  
TO GET HERE QUICK AND UNSEEN  
IN SUCH A DESOLATE AREA.

TRIED CONTACTING  
HIM FOR HOURS.

HAVE TO  
FIND HIM AND  
CONFIRM--

BATMAN!

GET OUT  
OF HERE--NOW--  
IT'S A TRAP!

THADDEUS!

YOU  
SHOULDN'T  
HAVE COME!

THE ENTIRE  
GROUND IS  
FLIPPING  
OVER--

GRAB MY  
HAND!

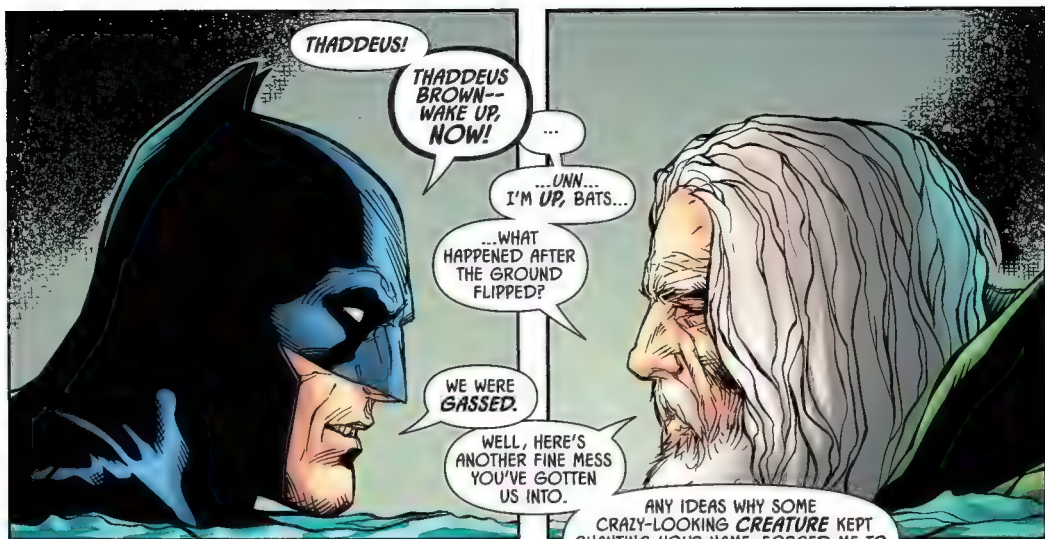
I'LL  
STABILIZE  
US--  
HOLD--

BOOM

LOSING  
BALANCE--  
CAN'T GET--

THOOM





THADDEUS!

THADDEUS  
BROWN--  
WAKE UP,  
NOW!

...UNN...  
I'M UP, BATS...

...WHAT  
HAPPENED AFTER  
THE GROUND  
FLIPPED?

WE WERE  
**GASSED.**

WELL, HERE'S  
ANOTHER FINE MESS  
YOU'VE GOTTEN  
US INTO.

ANY IDEAS WHY SOME  
CRAZY-LOOKING **CREATURE** KEPT  
CHANTING YOUR NAME, FORCED ME TO  
WEAR MY **OLD COSTUME**,  
AND CHAINED ME UP?



BECAUSE YOU  
WERE A **TEACHER.**

SPECIFICALLY,  
**ONE OF MINE.**

AND THAT'S  
OBVIOUSLY **NOT** A  
GOOD THING TO BE  
RIGHT NOW.

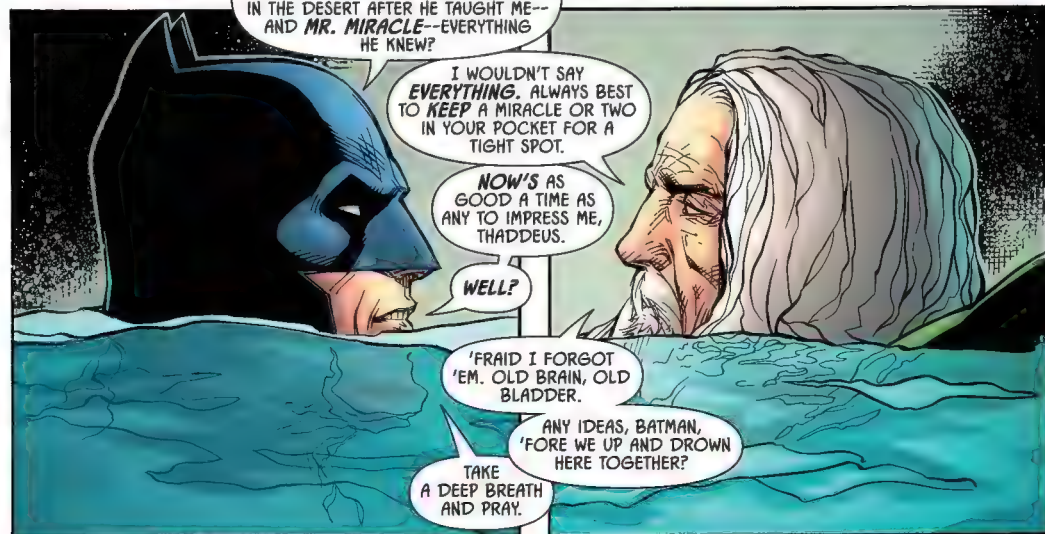
AFRAID  
IT'S NOT.

I HAVE  
TO GO TO THE  
BATHROOM.

I SUGGEST  
YOU HOLD IT.

AND I SUGGESTED  
YOU GET THE HELL OUT  
OF HERE WHEN I SAW  
YOU LANDING.

AND LEAVE ONE OF THE  
**GREATEST ESCAPE ARTISTS** THIS  
WORLD'S EVER KNOWN TO DIE ALONE  
IN THE DESERT AFTER HE TAUGHT ME--  
AND **MR. MIRACLE**--EVERYTHING  
HE KNEW?



I WOULDN'T SAY  
**EVERYTHING.** ALWAYS BEST  
TO **KEEP** A MIRACLE OR TWO  
IN YOUR POCKET FOR A  
TIGHT SPOT.

**NOW'S** AS  
GOOD A TIME AS  
ANY TO IMPRESS ME,  
THADDEUS.

WELL?

'FRAID I FORGOT  
'EM. OLD BRAIN, OLD  
BLADDER.

ANY IDEAS, BATMAN,  
'FORE WE UP AND DROWN  
HERE TOGETHER?

TAKE  
A DEEP BREATH  
AND PRAY.



"ALWAYS WITH THE  
OBVIOUS, BATMAN."





M · Y · T · H · O · L · O · G · Y

# WAITING FOR A MIRACLE



STORY AND WORDS  
**PETER J. TOMASI**

PENCILLER

**DOUG MAHNKE**

INKERS **CHRISTIAN ALAMY**

**& MARK IRWIN**

COLORIST **DAVID BARON**

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**& BARON**

ASST. EDITOR **DAVE WIELGOSZ**

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GROUP EDITOR **JAMIE S. RICH**



ASSESS.

THADDEUS' LIVING ROOM'S BEEN STAGED FOR THIS.

WINDOWS ARE SEALED WITH SOME KIND OF METAL.

MY TEACHER AND FRIEND'S LUNG CAPACITY ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE.

DAMN.

WHOEVER BOUND US TOOK MY UTILITY BELT.

BINDING STRAPS ARE MADE OF LEATHER.

SATURATED LEATHER GETS TIGHTER. PLACED IN PERFECT POSITION.

CAN'T SEPARATE EITHER OF MY SHOULDERS TO LOOSEN THEM.

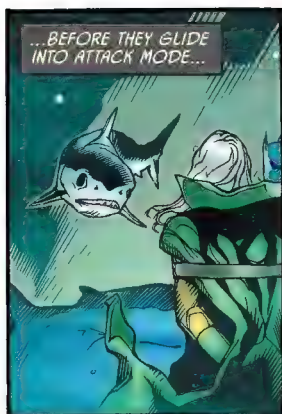
THADDEUS IS BLEEDING.

ZEROING THE SHARKS IN ON HIM.

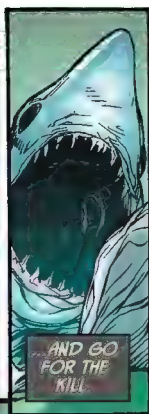
HE'S DOING HIS BEST TO REMAIN CALM AS THE SHARKS NUDGE AND PROD HIM.

THEY'RE SEEING HOW MUCH OF A THREAT HE IS.





...BEFORE THEY GLIDE  
INTO ATTACK MODE...



AND GO  
FOR THE  
KILL.

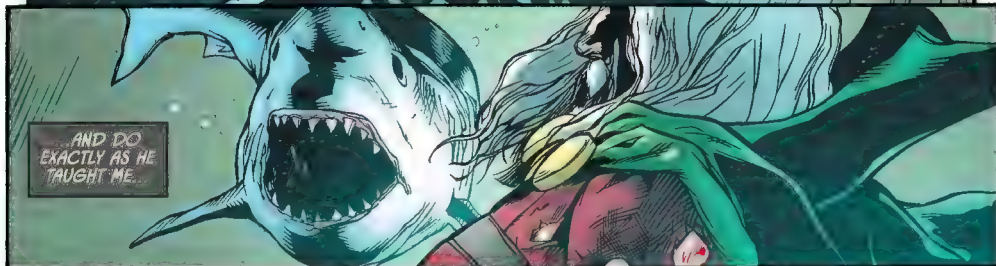


NOT ABOUT TO FLOAT HERE AND WATCH  
MY OLD TEACHER GET EATEN ALIVE.



THAT'LL BUY THADDEUS  
A FEW SECONDS TO  
REPOSITION HIMSELF.

SKETCH



AND DO  
EXACTLY AS HE  
TAUGHT ME...



...WHICH IS FOCUSING HARD  
AND USING THE TRAP...

...TO GET THE SHARK  
WRAPPED UP IN THE STRAP  
SO IT DROWNS ITSELF.

SHAPAP





THAT'S IT.

PAY ATTENTION  
TO ME.



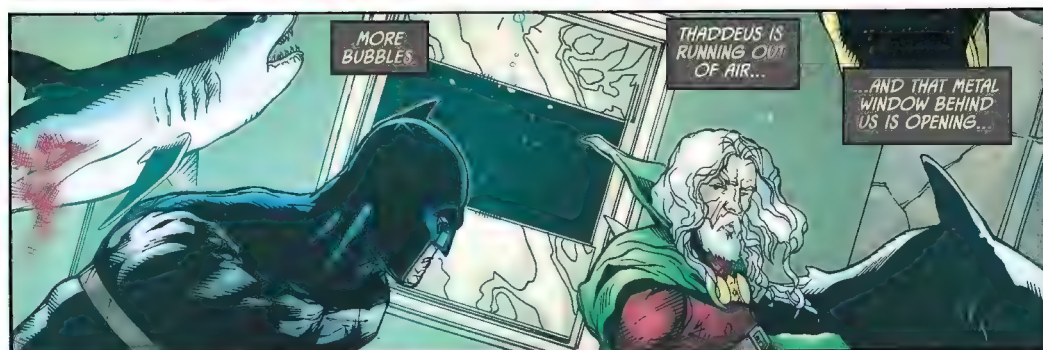
USE THE SHARK'S  
MOMENTUM  
AGAINST IT...

AND LET THE  
GLOVE SCALLOPS  
DO THE WORK...

...ON THE SHARK'S  
SOFT UNDERBELLY.



HELP OUR ODDS  
AND GIVE US A  
FIGHTING...



MORE  
BUBBLES.

THADDEUS IS  
RUNNING OUT  
OF AIR...

...AND THAT METAL  
WINDOW BEHIND  
US IS OPENING...



SO MUCH FOR  
OUR ODDS  
GETTING BETTER.





WHERE'S AQUAMAN  
WHEN YOU NEED HIM?

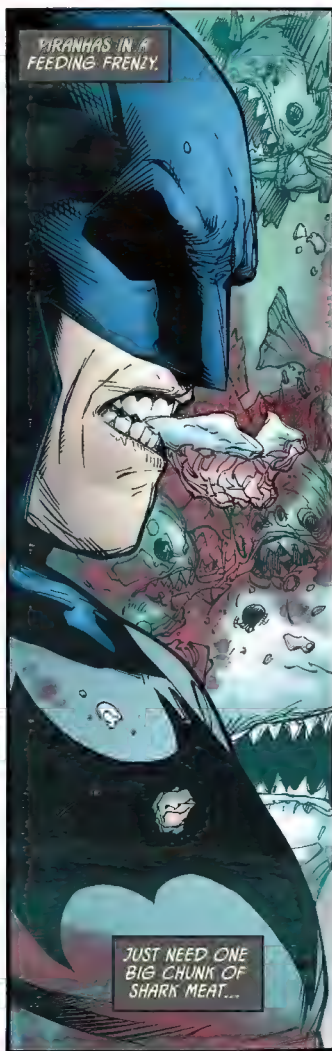


THE BLOODY SHARKS ARE  
RINGING THE DINNER BELL  
FOR THE PIRANHAS.

BUY US TIME  
BEFORE THEY  
REALIZE THERE'S  
MORE MEAT  
IN THE WATER.

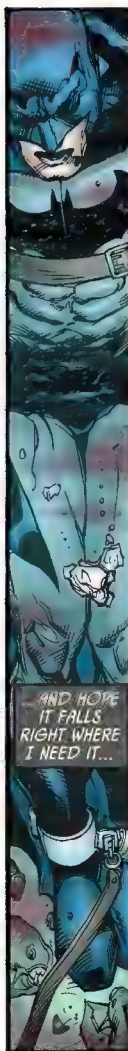
MY SUIT CAN  
WITHSTAND  
THE BITES.

BUT MY FACE, AND  
THADDEUS', CAN'T.



PIRANHAS IN A  
FEEDING FRENZY.

JUST NEED ONE  
BIG CHUNK OF  
SHARK MEAT...

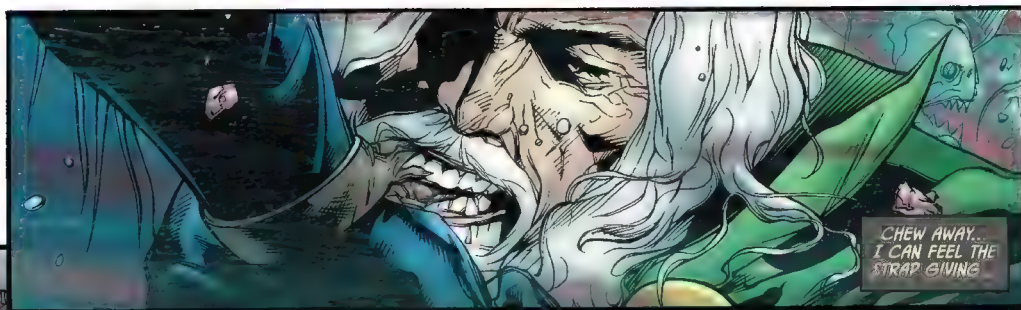
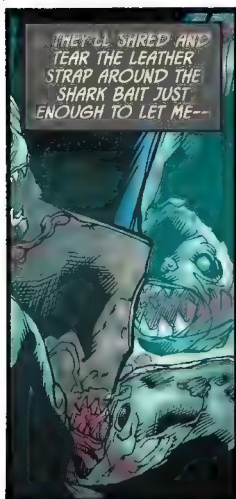


AND HOPE  
IT FALLS  
RIGHT WHERE  
I NEED IT...



PERFECT.



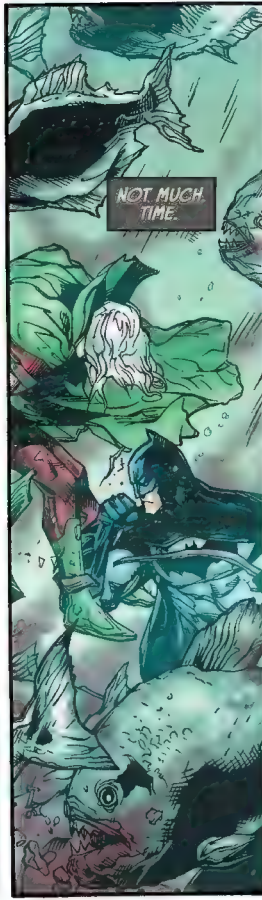




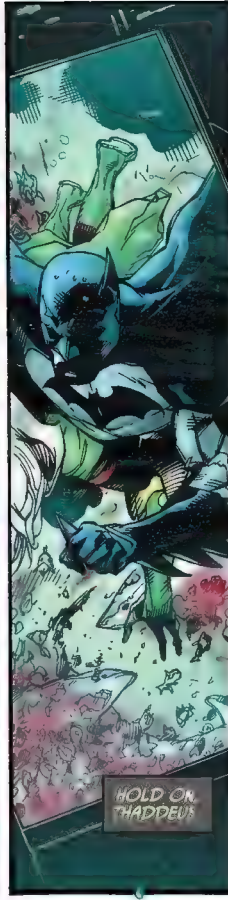


UNCONSCIOUS

HIS EYES ARE  
ROLLING  
BACK WHITE



NOT MUCH  
TIME



HOLD ON  
THADDEUS



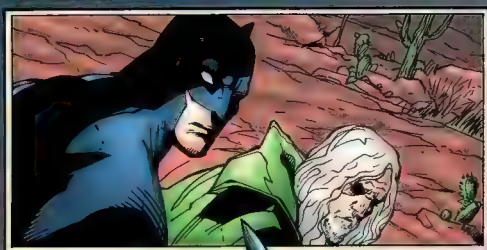
WE'RE GETTING  
THE HELL OUT  
OF HERE



GRAACH!

AAGHH!

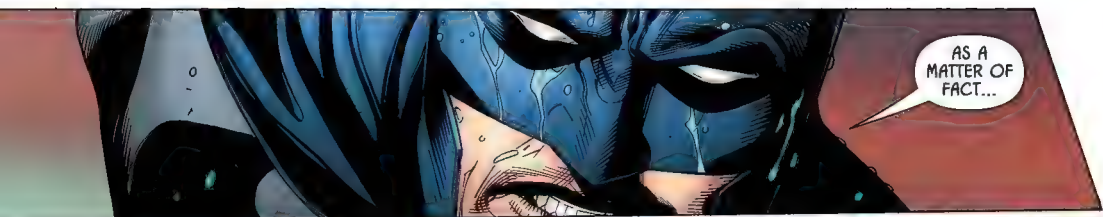




LOOKING  
FOR **HIS**  
BRUCE?







AS A  
MATTER OF  
FACT...



...I AM!



I CAN TAKE  
EVERYTHING.

ALL OF IT IN A BLINK  
OF AN EYE.

I KNOW  
ALL YOUR  
SECRETS.

ALL  
YOUR  
FEARS.

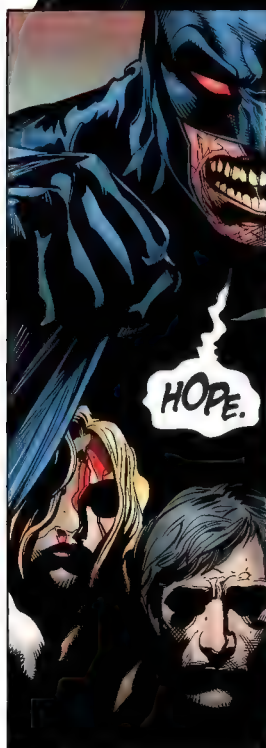


YOU  
FORGOT  
ABOUT...





...MY  
HOPES AND  
DREAMS.



HOPE.



HOPE AND  
DREAMS  
ARE FOR  
FOOLS.




I DREAM  
ABOUT LIVING LONG  
ENOUGH TO SEE  
GRANDCHILDREN,  
BRUCE.

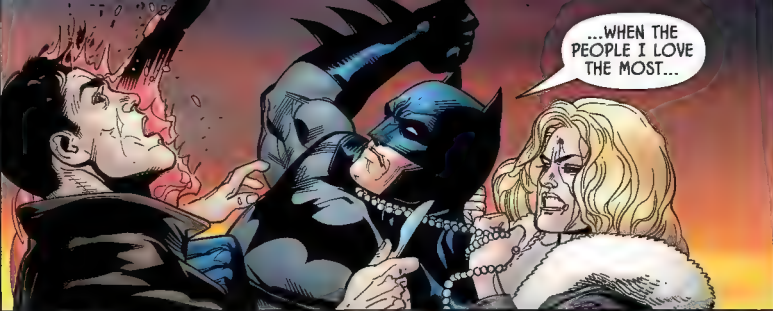


I DREAM ABOUT ALL  
THOSE PATIENTS I COULD  
HAVE SAVED, SON.







AND  
I DREAM OF  
THE DAY...



...WHEN THE  
PEOPLE I LOVE  
THE MOST...

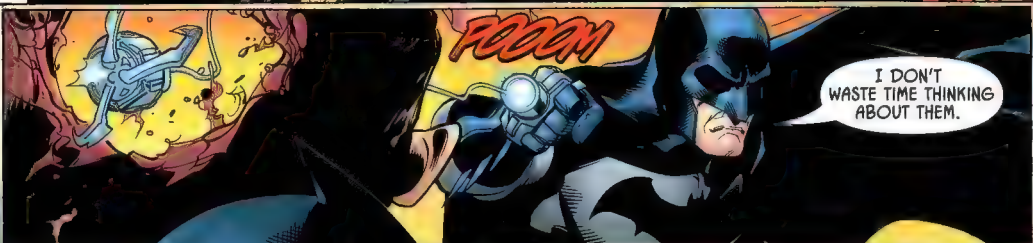


...AREN'T USED  
AGAINST ME.



WELL, THEN,  
WHAT ABOUT THE  
PEOPLE YOU HATE,  
KID?

**BAM  
BLAMBLAMBLAM  
BLAM**



I DON'T  
WASTE TIME THINKING  
ABOUT THEM.

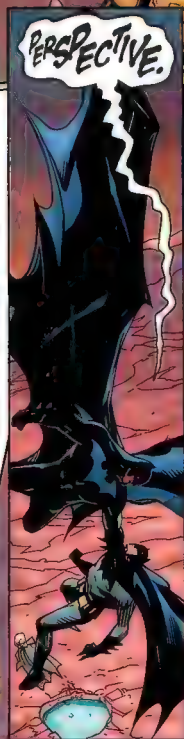
**POOM**



WHAT  
ABOUT  
US?

YES, WHAT  
ABOUT THE PEOPLE  
WHO SUPPORT YOU  
AND CARRY OUT  
YOUR EVERY  
WHIM?









...I NEED  
YOU TO  
SHUT THE  
HELL UP!



GAAK

SUNK

FOR SOME  
LAB-CREATED  
FREAK...

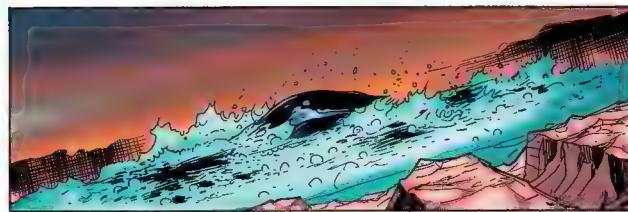
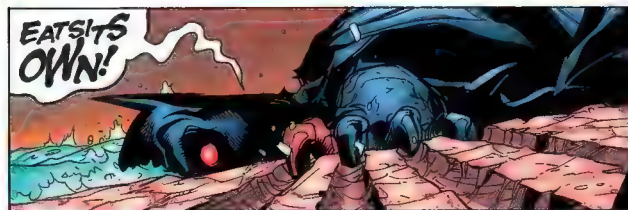
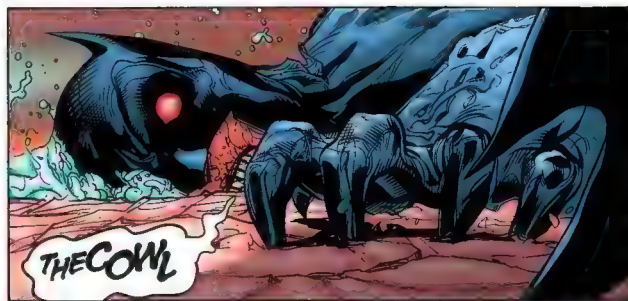


...YOU  
TALK TOO  
MUCH.

SUNK











=>WHEW<=

THAT WAS  
SOMETHING YOU  
DON'T SEE  
EVERY DAY.

PULLED OFF  
SOME **NICE MOVES**  
DOWN THERE,  
BRUCE.

**ESCAPE**  
**ARTISTRY** AT  
ITS FINEST.

LEARNED  
IT FROM  
YOU...

...A REAL  
**MIRACLE**  
MAN.

**KLK**



NEED A  
LIFT?

WITH MY  
**RIFLEMAN** AND  
**TWILIGHT ZONE**  
COLLECTIONS GONE--  
ALONG WITH MY ROOF--  
I'M GUESSING I DO.



BUT I GOTTA SAY,  
I'D RATHER KEEP THE  
OL' BLOOD AND  
MUSCLES MOVING  
AND **JOIN UP** WITH  
YOU...

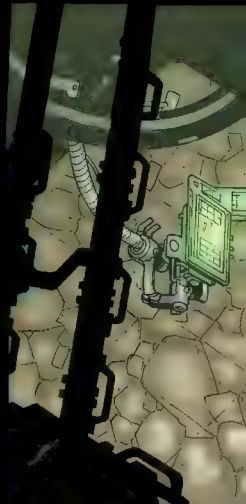
...FOLLOW YOU TO  
WHATEVER END YOU'RE  
HEADING FOR.

SORRY,  
MAYBE NEXT  
TIME.

THIS IS A  
**SOLO MISSION**,  
THADDEUS.



NINETY MILES NORTH  
OF GOTHAM CITY.



...MY LAB...

...DESTROYED...



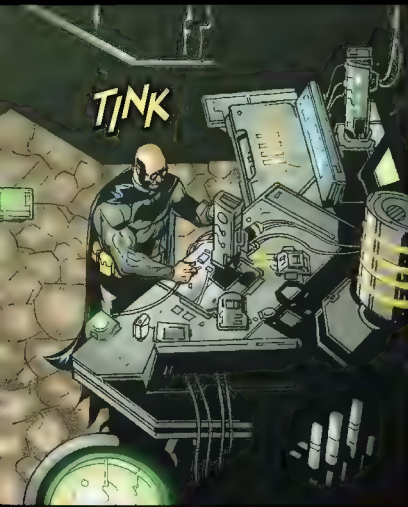
...WHO  
ATTACKS  
MY INNER  
SANCTUM...

...ALL MY  
WORK...



THIS FOUL  
TRANSGRESSION **WILL**  
BE REWARDED...

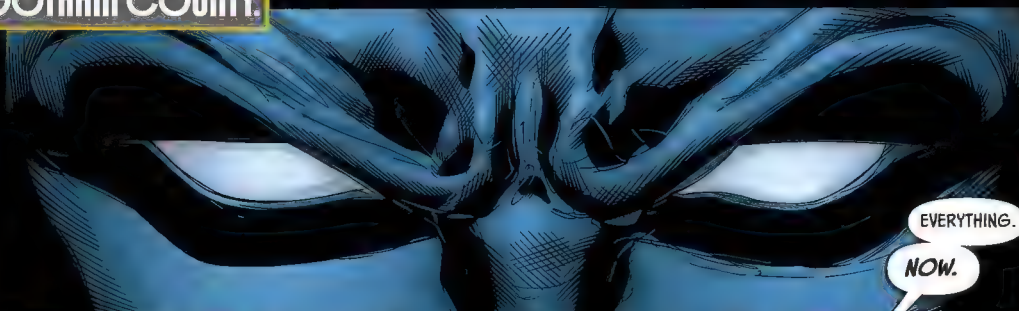






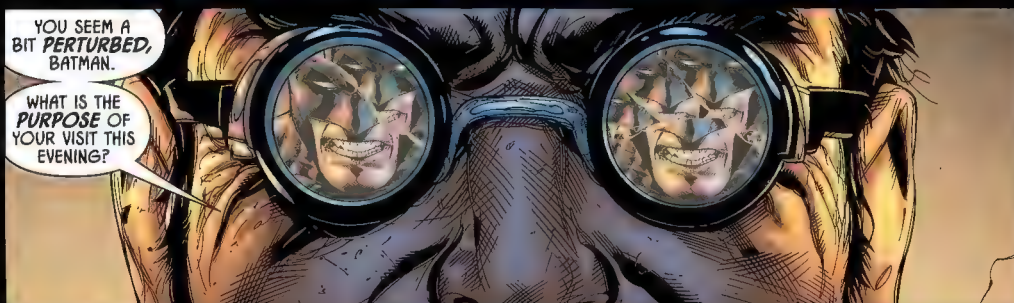






YOU SEEM A  
BIT **PERTURBED**,  
BATMAN.

WHAT IS THE  
**PURPOSE** OF  
YOUR VISIT THIS  
EVENING?



YOU KNOW  
DAMN WELL WHY  
I'M HERE,  
STRANGE!



PLEASE...

...**ENLIGHTEN**  
ME!

THE  
**MONSTERS!**



I HAVE  
**NO IDEA** WHAT  
YOU'RE **TALKING**  
ABOUT!

WE'LL JUST  
SEE ABOUT  
THAT.







UP TO YOUR  
OLD TRICKS AGAIN,  
STRANGER!

BASTARDIZING  
SCIENCE FOR YOUR  
UNHOLY WAYS.

ATTACKING  
NOT JUST ME--  
BUT PEOPLE I *CARE*  
ABOUT!



EACH OF THEM ARE IN  
DIFFERENT GROWTH STAGES,  
BUT *THIS* TIME THEY ALL  
LOOK LIKE *YOU*!

ARE THESE  
THE *NEXT* GROUP  
YOU'RE SENDING  
MY WAY ON THEIR  
KAMIKAZE  
RUNS?

THESE  
SPECIMENS ARE  
THE *ONLY* ONES  
I'M WORKING  
ON.

*NONE*  
OF THEM HAVE  
STEPPED FOOT  
OFF THE  
GROUNDS.



BUT TELL  
ME MORE ABOUT  
THESE *OTHER...*  
MONSTERS.

BIG, STRONG,  
ABILITY TO MORPH,  
FLY, TAKE ON LIKENESSES  
OF CREEPS I'VE THROWN  
IN ARKHAM, PEOPLE  
I FIGHT ALONGSIDE--  
EVEN *MYSELF*.



AMAZING.

*NONE* OF  
MY CREATURES ARE  
AS SOPHISTICATED  
AS *THAT*.

WHAT YOU  
AND YOUR BAT-FAMILY  
DESTROYED *RECENTLY*  
IS AT THE *TOP* OF MY  
CAPABILITIES.\*

\*SEE THE  
BATMAN:  
NIGHT OF THE  
MONSTER MEN  
TPB! --CHRIS



YOU MUST HAVE SOME OF THEIR **CELLS** ON YOUR GLOVE AFTER HITTING THEM--LET ME GET A SLIDE--SCRAPE SOME SAMPLES--THE **PSYCHOLOGICAL** ASPECTS OF THIS ARE...ARE...

YOU'RE **DELUSIONAL** IF YOU THINK I'D LET THAT HAPPEN.

YOUR NEXT STOP AFTER I TIE THIS UP IS ARK--

SIR.

YES.

**JASON BLOOD** IS REACHING OUT TO YOU.

PATCH HIM IN.

**BLOOD.**

IT'S COME THROUGH AND I CAN'T--

WHAT'S COME THROUGH?

**BLOOD?**

**HELLO?**

LET ME HELP YOU UNCOVER WHAT TORTURED EPISODE YOU ENDURED THAT MADE YOU PUT ON THE COWL...

WE LOST THE CALL.

FLY THE PLANE BACK ON AUTOPILOT AND SEND THE **HB SUIT** TO MY CURRENT COORDINATES ON CLOAK MODE.

...WE'LL DELVE DEEP TO FIND OUT WHAT MAKES YOU **TICK**, BATMAN.

FOUND OUT A LONG TIME AGO...

**KRAK**

...WHAT MAKES **ME** TICK, STRANGE.



CONTINUES

I WAS WRONG  
ABOUT STRANGE.

AND THIS CURRENT  
ATTACK IS NO  
COINCIDENCE.

BLOOD IS  
ON MY LIST

I WENT TO  
HIM EARLY ON,  
AFTER ZATARA.

CRIMINALS ARE A  
SUPERSTITIOUS AND  
COWARDLY LOT.

AND WHEN IT  
CAME TO LEARNING  
ABOUT FEAR AND  
INTIMIDATION,  
I COULDN'T IMAGINE  
A BETTER TEACHER  
TO GO TO...

...THAN A MAN WHO'S BEEN  
FORCED TO LIVE WITH A  
RAGING DEMON INSIDE  
HIM FIGHTING TO GET OUT.

BOOM



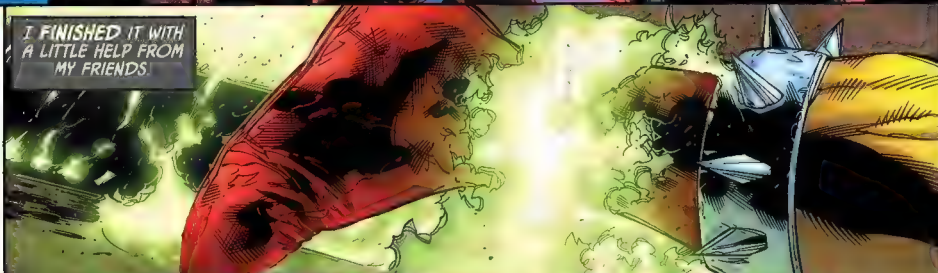


BATMAN.

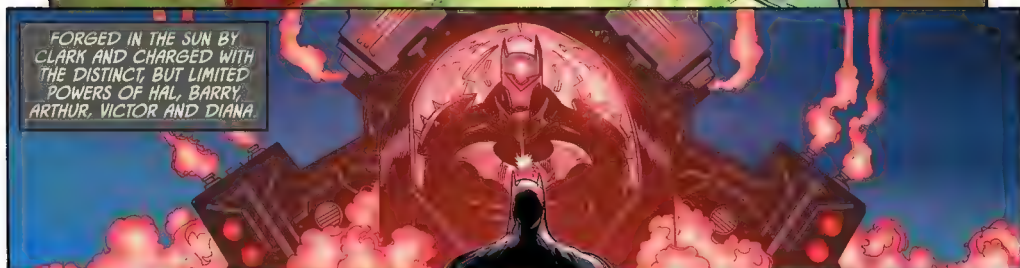
VOICE  
RECOGNIZED.  
HELLBAT ACCESS  
GRANTED.

BEEN A WHILE SINCE  
I WORE THIS SUIT.

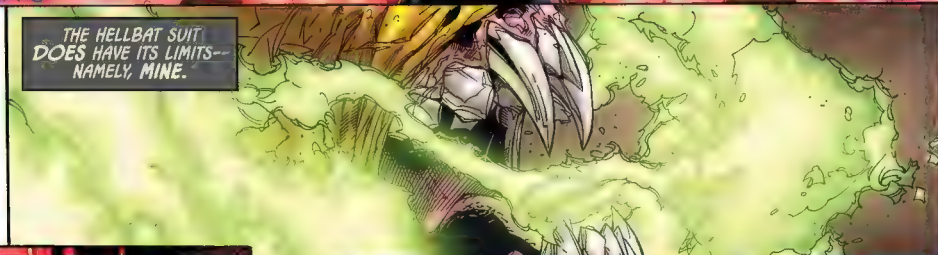
A MAN'S GOT TO KNOW HIS LIMITATIONS--AND  
BEING JUST FLESH AND BONE, I CONCEIVED AND  
DESIGNED THIS SUIT FOR THE SINGULAR PURPOSE  
OF GOING TOE-TO-TOE WITH LARGE-SCALE  
THREATS AND EXTREME BATTLE SCENARIOS.



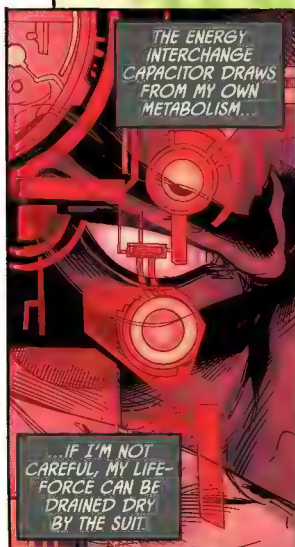
I FINISHED IT WITH  
A LITTLE HELP FROM  
MY FRIENDS.



FORGED IN THE SUN BY  
CLARK AND CHARGED WITH  
THE DISTINCT, BUT LIMITED  
POWERS OF HAL, BARRY,  
ARTHUR, VICTOR AND DIANA.



THE HELLBAT SUIT  
DOES HAVE ITS LIMITS--  
NAMELY, MINE.



THE ENERGY  
INTERCHANGE  
CAPACITOR DRAWS  
FROM MY OWN  
METABOLISM...

...IF I'M NOT  
CAREFUL, MY LIFE-  
FORCE CAN BE  
DRAINED DRY  
BY THE SUIT.



I THINK OF THE HELLBAT IN  
ONE WAY, IN CASE OF  
EMERGENCY BREAK GLASS.

...AND WORRY ABOUT  
CLEANING UP THE  
SHARDS LATER.





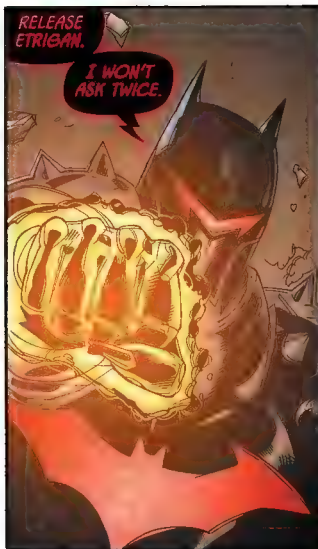
ETRIGANI!

GRNNH!

SPASH







RELEASE  
ETRIGAN.

I WON'T  
ASK TWICE.

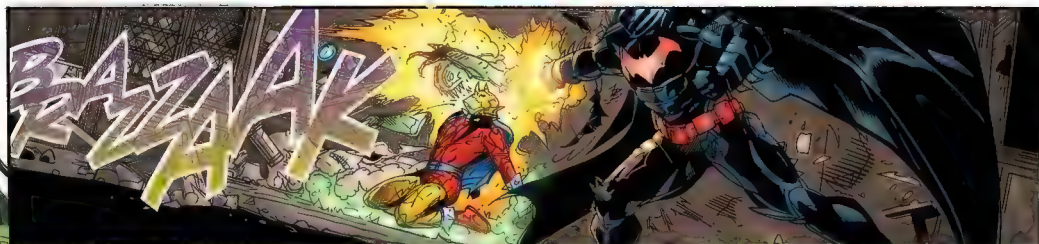


RRMFFF!

BATS AND  
DEMONS.

DEMONS  
AND BATS.

I WILL RELEASE  
ETRIGAN ONLY AFTER  
I CONSUME EVERY OUNCE  
OF HIS FOUL BLOOD AND  
EMPOWER--



A MAN OF  
HIS WORD.

HOW RARE  
INDEED.

JUST LIKE  
THE MEAT THAT  
WILL HANG FROM  
YOUR BONES.



FRROOSH

A MOMENT  
TO TALK,  
BUT NOT TO  
WALK!

THIS  
CREATURE  
OF FEAR  
HAS HOPE  
TO--

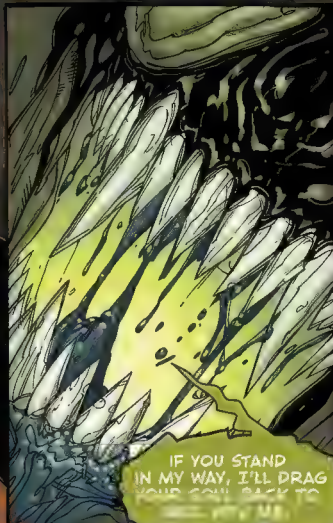


HEA WAA! WAA!  
ETRIKAN!

THE BAT  
WILL LEARN  
WHEN HE  
FIGHTS.

GNNF!

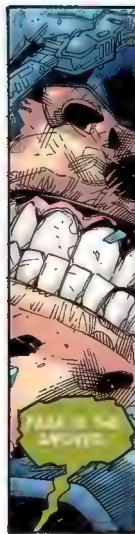
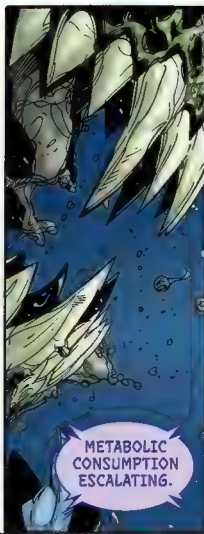
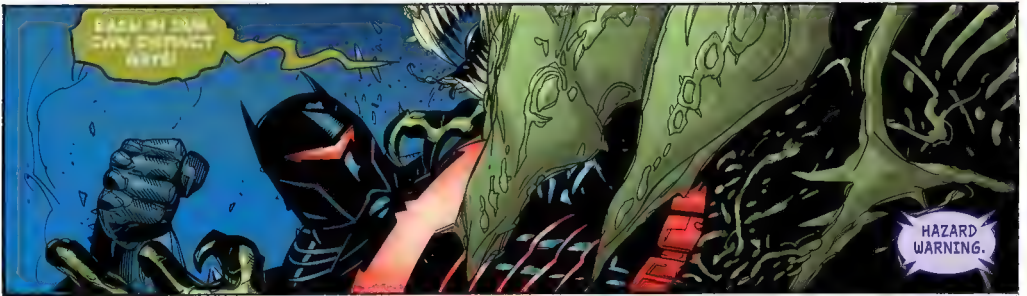












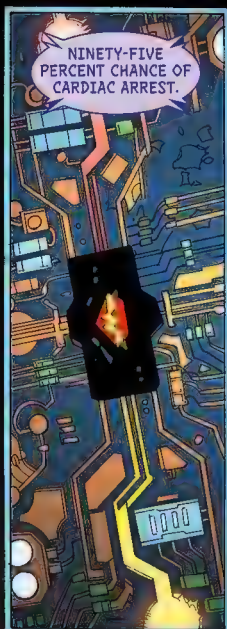




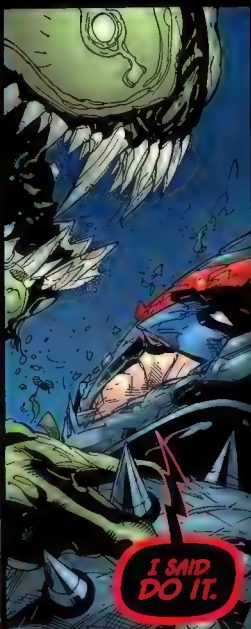
INITIATE  
DEVASTATOR.

NINETY PERCENT  
CHANCE PHYSIOLOGY  
WILL NOT BE ABLE TO  
WITHSTAND SYNTHESIZED  
POWER SURGE.

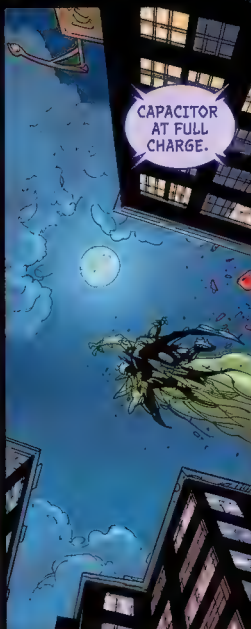
ENGAGE.



NINETY-FIVE  
PERCENT CHANCE OF  
CARDIAC ARREST.



I SAID  
DO IT.



CAPACITOR  
AT FULL  
CHARGE.



ROUTE ALL  
POWER TO  
RIGHT HAND,  
NOW.



ROUTING...



DEVASTATOR  
SYNTHESIS  
COMPLETE.



GRHH...



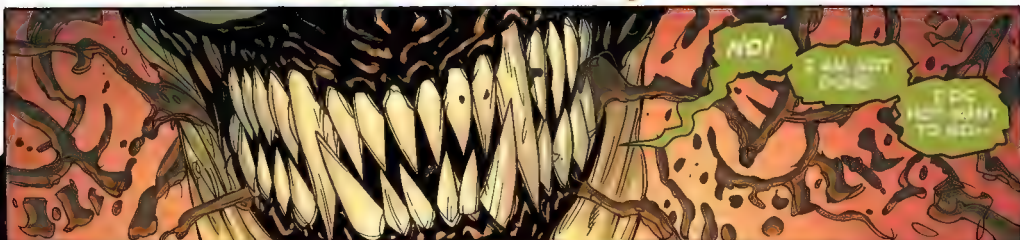


REDIRECT  
DESCENT  
ANGLE.

TAKE US  
BACK TO  
LAUNCH  
POINT.

REDIRECTING6...







THOUGH  
I AM LOATH  
TO SAY IT,  
A THANK YOU  
HAS PAID IT.

I CAME TO  
SAVE BLOOD,  
NOT A DEMON  
FROM HELL.

SO IF YOU  
WANT TO EXPRESS  
YOUR THANKS IN A  
MEANINGFUL WAY,  
YOU'LL--

ENOUGH!

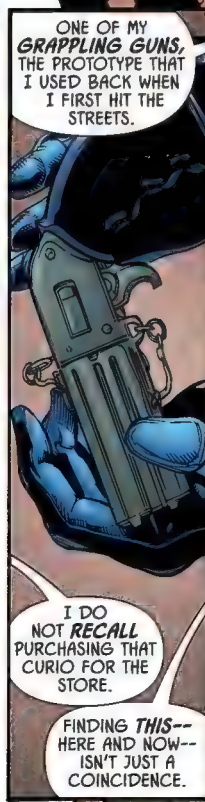
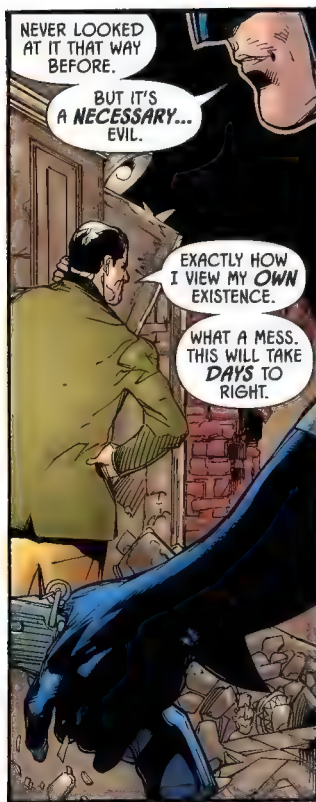
IF IT'S  
THE MEAT AND  
BONES YOU  
WANT...

...THEN  
IT'S THE MEAT  
AND BONES YOU  
SHALL HAVE.

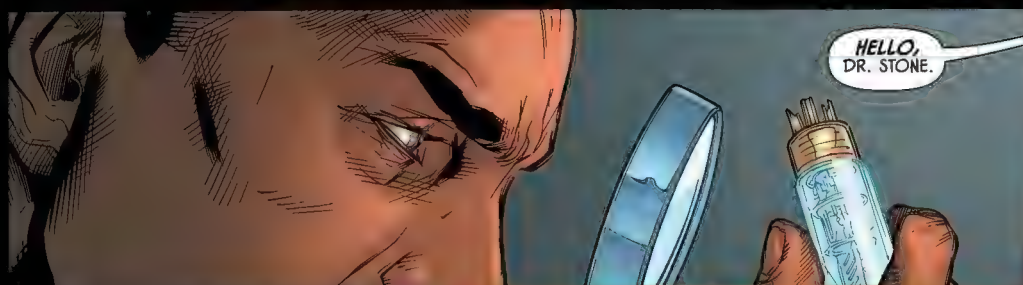
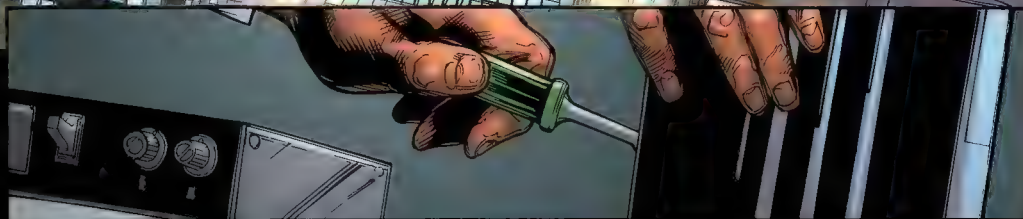
GONE NOW,  
O ETRIGAN,  
THE BATTLE HAS  
BEEN FOUGHT  
AND WON.

JASON  
BLOOD  
WITH ME IS  
DONE!













I CAME  
HERE TO **SAVE**  
YOU.



DOES IT **LOOK**  
LIKE I NEED  
SAVING?



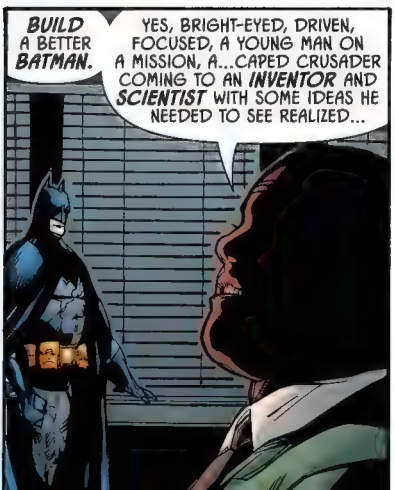
NO,  
NOT AT THE  
MOMENT.

AND JUST  
WHO ARE YOU  
HERE TO SAVE  
ME **FROM**?



SOMEONE...SOMETHING  
HAS BEEN TRYING TO **KILL**  
EVERYONE WHO'S BEEN A  
TEACHER, GUIDE OR  
MENTOR TO ME...

...ANYONE  
WHO HAD A **ROLE**--  
OR WAS A BUILDING  
BLOCK WHEN I WAS  
TRYING TO--



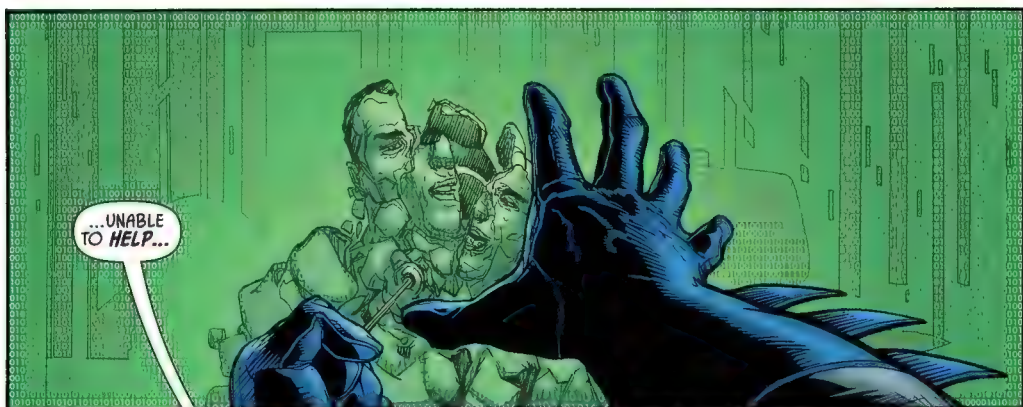
**BUILD  
A BETTER  
BATMAN.**

YES, BRIGHT-EYED, DRIVEN,  
FOCUSED, A YOUNG MAN ON  
A MISSION, A...CAPED CRUSADER  
COMING TO AN **INVENTOR** AND  
**SCIENTIST** WITH SOME IDEAS HE  
NEEDED TO SEE REALIZED...











M · Y · T · H · O · L · O · G · Y

# HELL AND BACK

...WE'D HAVE  
TO WAGE WAR  
ON *OURSELVES*,  
BRUCE.



STORY AND WORDS: **PETER J. TOMASI** • PENCILLER: **DOUG MAHNKE**  
INKERS: **JAIME MENDOZA** AND **MARK IRWIN** • COLORIST: **DAVID BARON** • LETTERER: **ROB LEIGH**  
COVER: **MAHNKE, MENDOZA, BARON** • ASST. EDITOR: **DAVE WIELGOSZ**  
EDITOR: **CHRIS CONROY** • GROUP EDITOR: **JAMIES. RICH**







...HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY,  
BRUCE!



DID THAT  
JOG YOUR  
MEMORY?



DO YOU REMEMBER NOW  
THAT *YOU* INITIATED ALL  
THIS?

NO...  
I DON'T...

SEE, YOU'VE  
GOTTEN TOO  
GOOD AT PLAYING  
EVERY YEAR.





M · Y · T · H · O · L · O · G · Y

# THE PRICE YOU PAY

STORY AND WORDS  
**PETER J. TOMASI**  
PENCILLER

**DOUG MAHNKE**

INKERS **CHRISTIAN ALAMY,**

**KEITH CHAMPAGNE,**

**MARK IRWIN &**

**JAIME MENDOZA**

COLORIST **DAVID BARON**

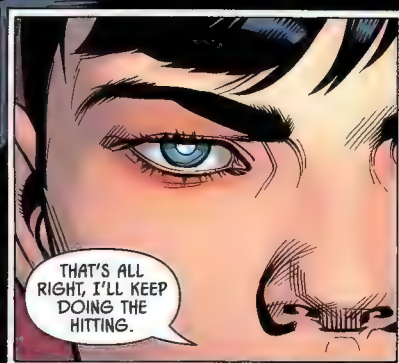
LETTERER **ROB LEIGH**

COVER **MAHNKE, MENDOZA & BARON**

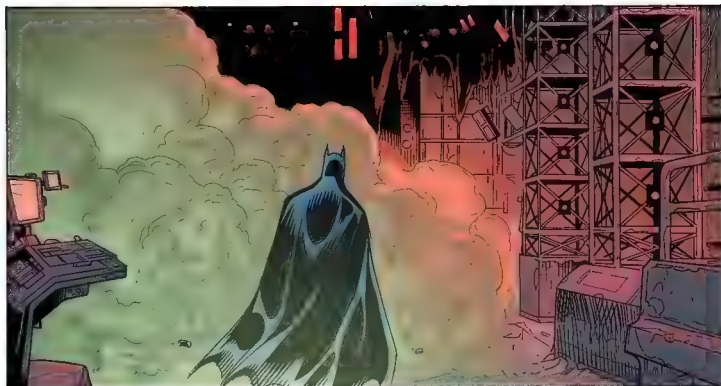
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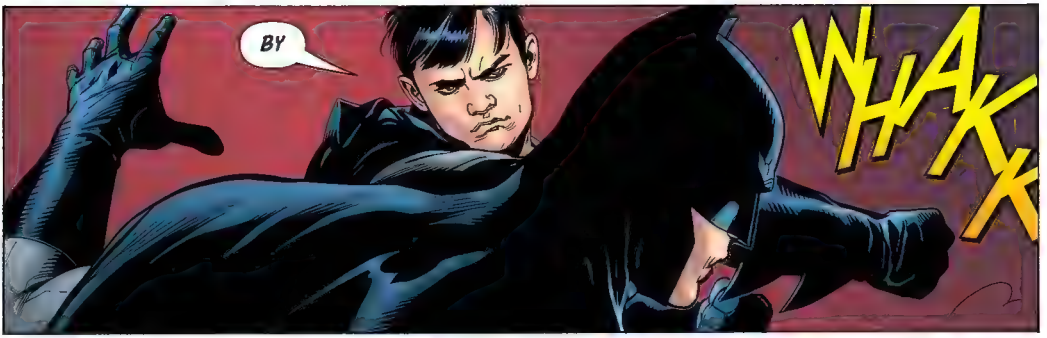
GROUP EDITOR **JAMIE S. RICH**



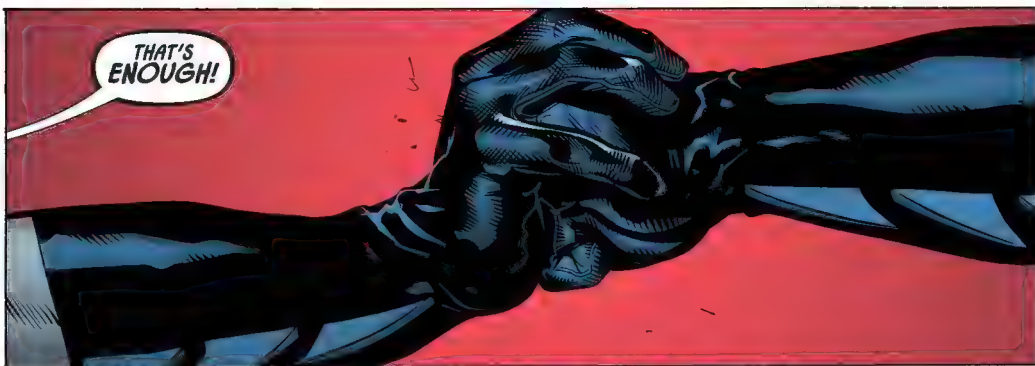








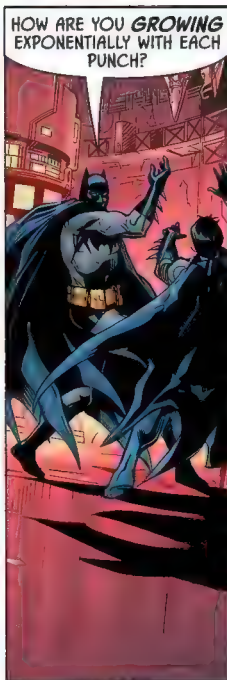




THAT'S  
ENOUGH!



WHOEVER OR WHATEVER  
YOU ARE--I SAID I'M NOT  
GOING TO HIT YOU AND  
I MEANT IT.



HOW ARE YOU *GROWING*  
EXPONENTIALLY WITH EACH  
PUNCH?



NNF  
YOU  
STILL DON'T  
GET IT!



I'M YOU.  
YOU'RE  
ME.  
THIS IS US,  
AND WE'RE  
DROWNING.



WHO SENT  
YOU?!

YOU SENT ME,  
DAMN IT, AND I'M  
TRYING TO SAVE  
YOU!

GIVE US SOME  
PERSPECTIVE--  
ILLUMINATION--

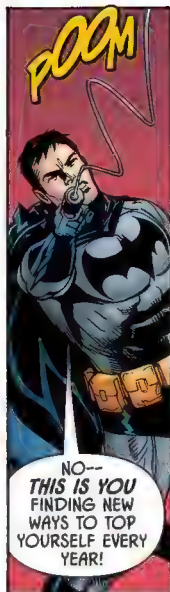
--TO WAKE  
YOU THE  
HELL UP!





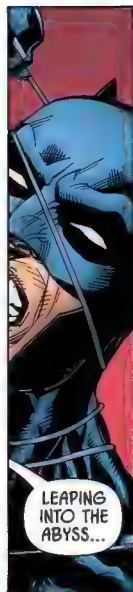
MY EYES  
ARE WIDE  
OPEN!

IS THIS  
SCARECROW'S  
DOING?



POOM

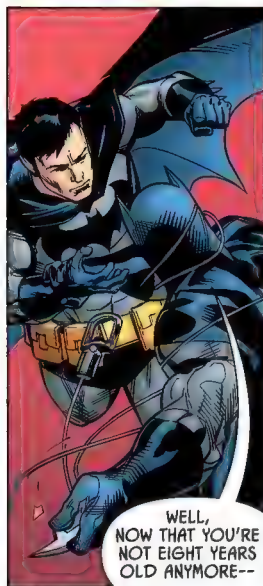
NO--  
THIS IS YOU  
FINDING NEW  
WAYS TO TOP  
YOURSELF EVERY  
YEAR!



LEAPING  
INTO THE  
ABYSS...



...AND  
LAUGHING  
ALL THE WAY  
DOWN.



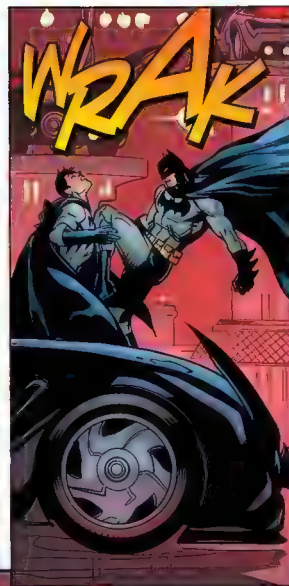
WELL,  
NOW THAT YOU'RE  
NOT EIGHT YEARS  
OLD ANYMORE--



WHAM

GNFF

--I'VE  
DECIDED  
I CAN HIT  
YOU AFTER  
ALL!



WRACK



FRAK



WE LEARNED THE **HARD** WAY  
THE GOOD OLD DAYS WEREN'T  
ALL THAT GOOD...



...BUT IN HINDSIGHT,  
THERE WAS A WEIRD  
PURITY TO THEM...

...BEFORE WE  
SURROUNDED  
OURSELVES WITH  
ALL THIS...  
**STUFF...**



...BEFORE WE  
DECLARED  
WAR...





...AND ALMOST  
DIED IN OUR  
FIRST YEAR OF  
BATTLE!

SKOM



WE CAN  
STILL SEE THAT  
PIMP LUNGING  
FORWARD  
FAST...

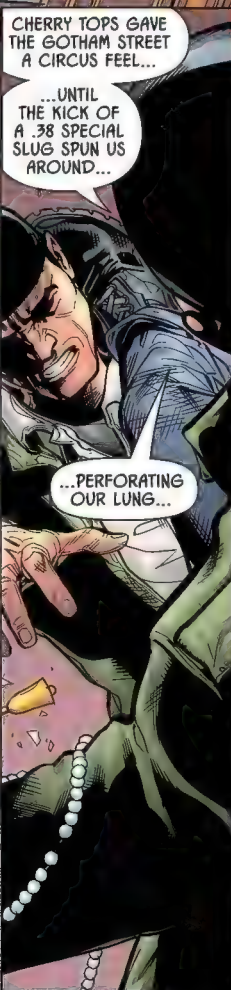
...THE GLARE  
OF NEON FLARING  
OFF THE BLADE IN  
HIS HAND...



...THE UNMISTAKABLE  
SOUND OUR BOOT  
MADE AS IT BROKE HIS  
CHEEKBONE...

...GROWING  
OVERCONFIDENT...

...UNTIL THAT  
YOUNG GIRL SLID  
HER KNIFE INTO OUR  
THIGH WITHOUT  
HESITATION...



CHERRY TOPS GAVE  
THE GOTHAM STREET  
A CIRCUS FEEL...

...UNTIL  
THE KICK OF  
A .38 SPECIAL  
SLUG SPUN US  
AROUND...

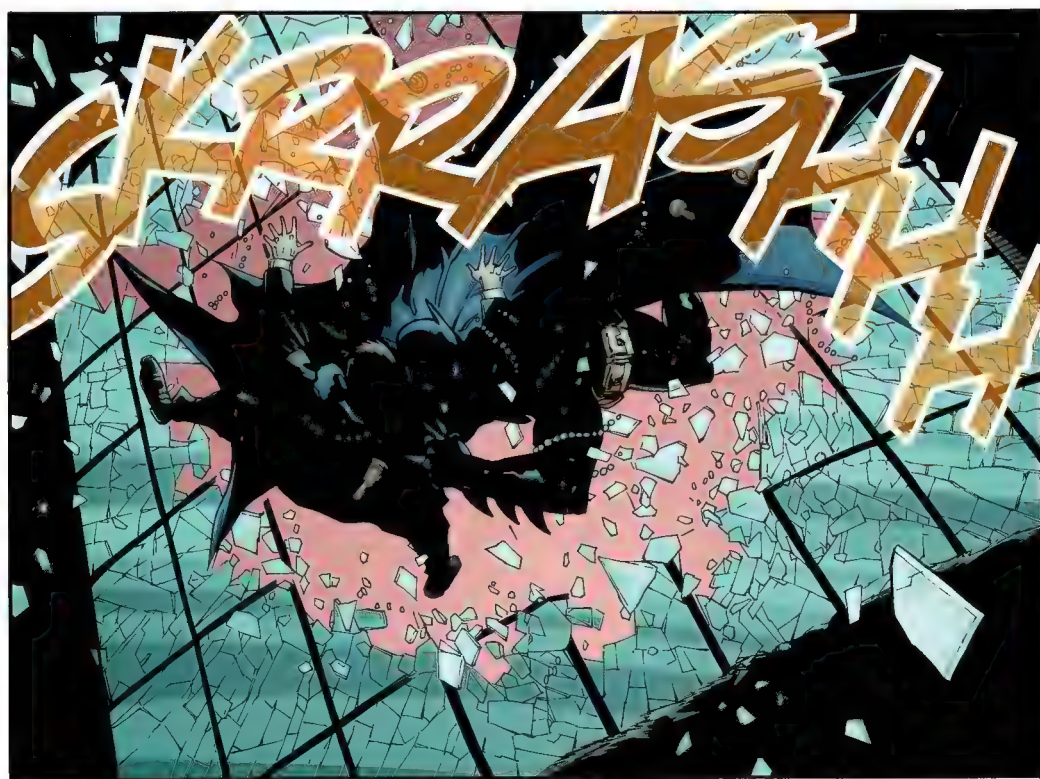
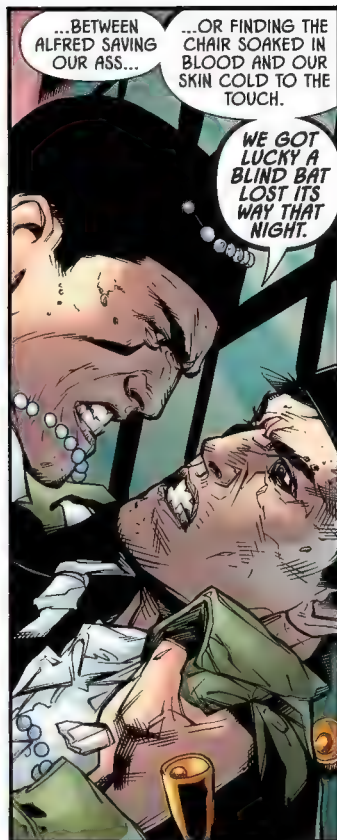
...PERFORATING  
OUR LUNG...



...THE COPPERY  
TASTE OF BLOOD  
FILLING OUR  
MOUTH...

...DREAD  
THAT THE CRUSADE  
WAS OVER BEFORE  
WE COULD  
BEGIN...

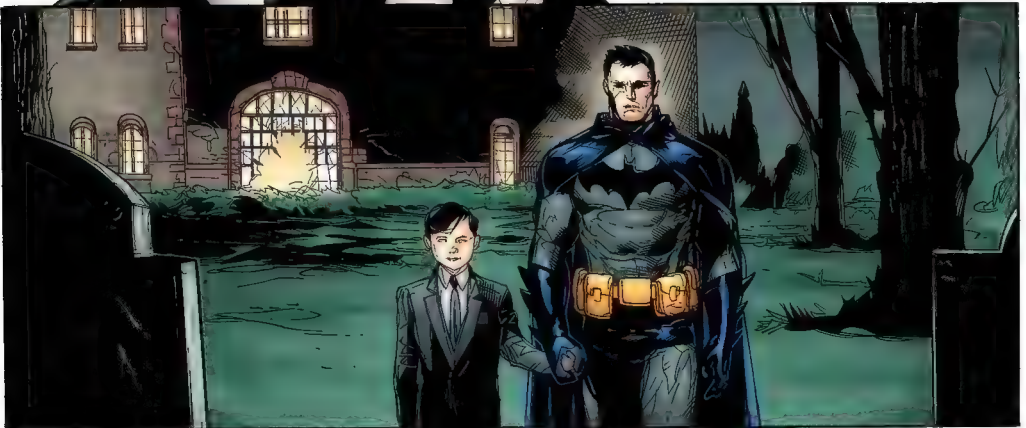




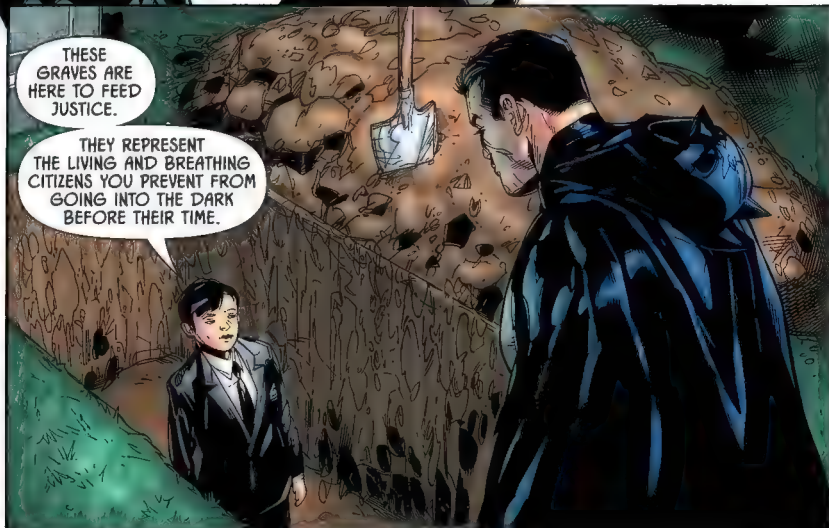
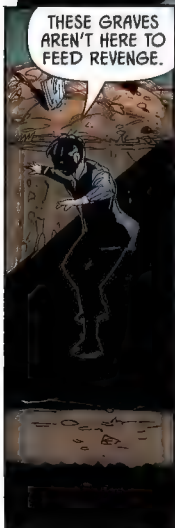




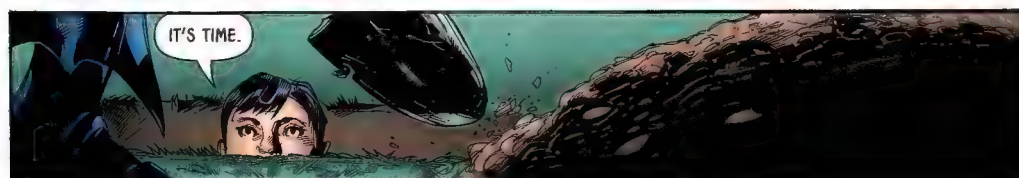
COMING?















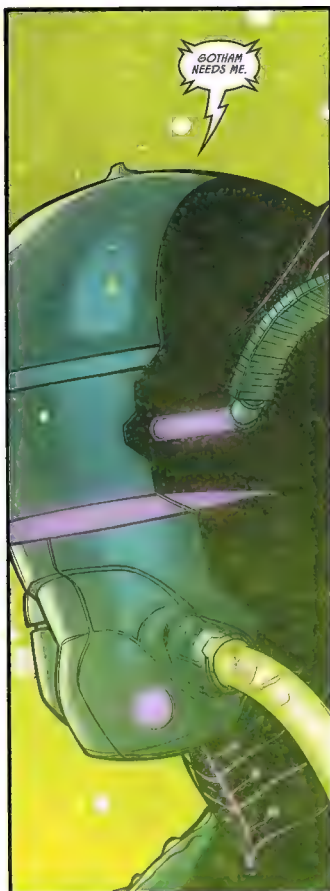
BE  
YOUR BEST,  
BRUCE.



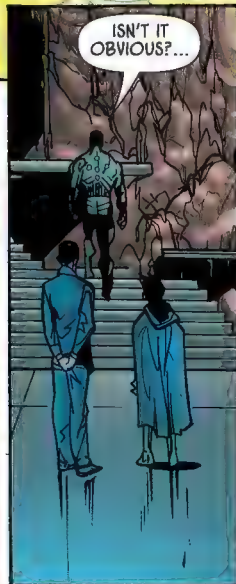
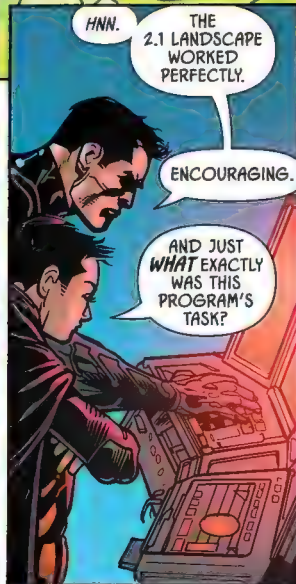
NEVER  
QUESTION YOUR  
MISSION.

GOTHAM  
NEEDS  
YOU.













AND THIS IS SOMETHING YOU'VE BEEN DOING **EVERY YEAR** ON YOUR BIRTHDAY?

THE TESTING APPARATUS **ITSELF** HAS EVOLVED OVER TIME, BUT YES, THIS IS AN ANNUAL... EVENT I'VE KEPT TO MYSELF.

WHY WOULD YOU SUBJECT YOURSELF TO THAT?

EVOLVE OR DIE, BOY.

TO **HONOR** THE OATH I TOOK MEANT STRIVING TO BE THE BEST I CAN BE.

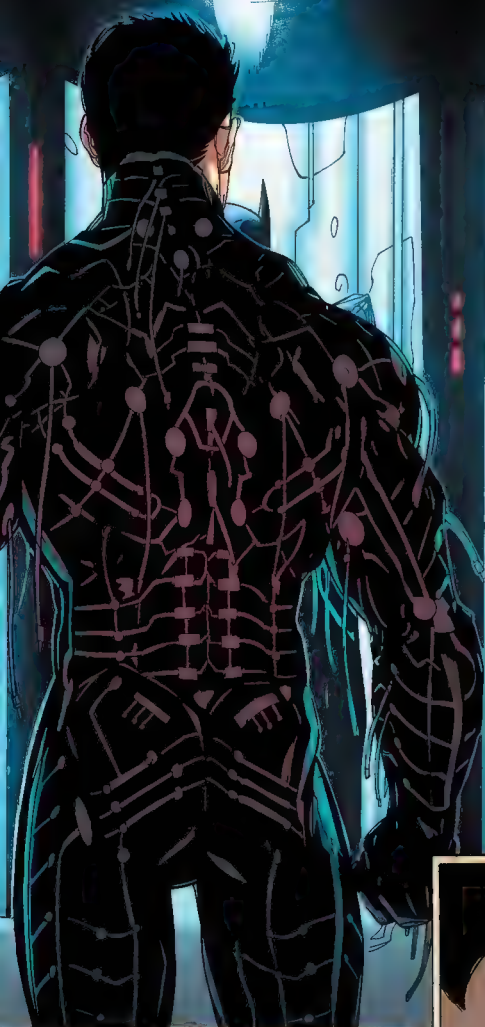
EVERY MOMENT.

EVERY DAY.

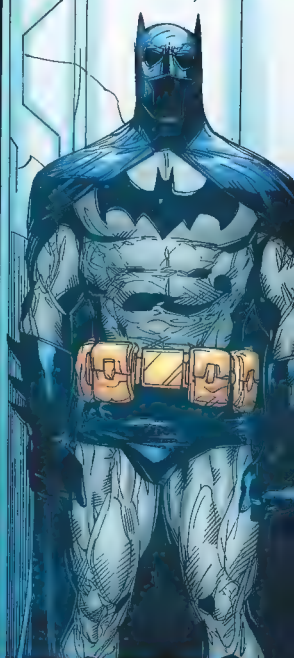
**HONING** EACH AND EVERY **SKILL SET** I'VE LEARNED TO ITS MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY.



...TO  
KILL ME.



ASSESS EVERY  
PHYSICAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
LAYER.



MY FEAR IS THAT, ONE NIGHT  
WHEN I NEED TO BE STRONGER,  
FASTER, AND SMARTER, I WON'T  
BE GOOD ENOUGH.

THERE'S A COST  
TO WEARING THE COWL,  
JUST AS THERE'S A COST  
TO BEING ROBIN. THAT  
WE BOTH KNOW ALL  
TOO WELL....






...BUT THAT COST DOESN'T WEIGH AS HEAVILY AS IT WOULD IF I *DIDN'T* WEAR THE COWL.

A close-up, high-contrast black and white illustration of a man's face in profile, looking down. The man has short, dark hair and a serious expression. A speech bubble from him says "SHOW ME."







ONE HUNDRED  
AND EIGHTY-TWO  
GOTHAM CITIZENS  
MURDERED THIS  
YEAR.



LAST YEAR IT WAS TWO HUNDRED  
AND FOURTEEN, FATHER.

TWO HUNDRED  
AND THIRTY-ONE LIVES THE YEAR  
BEFORE *THAT*, BRUCE.

I'D LIKE TO POINT OUT THE  
NUMBER OF MURDERED INNOCENT SOULS  
HAS BEEN **DROPPING** SINCE THE NIGHT YOU  
RANG THE BELL AND PUT ON THE COWL.

ONE YEAR,  
SOON, IT WILL  
BE ZERO.

ABSOLUTE  
ZERO.



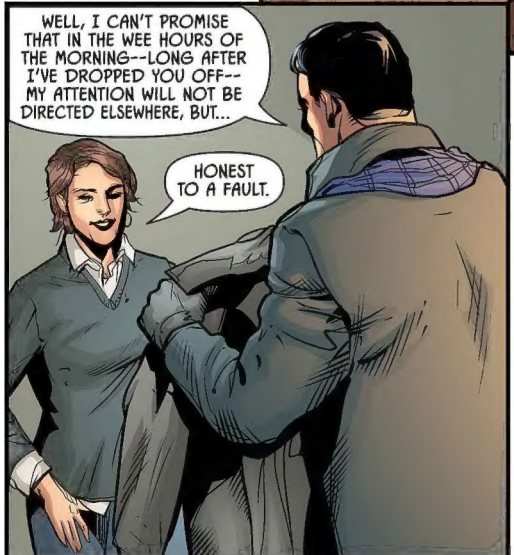


HEARD A CRAZY RUMOR PEOPLE TEND TO EAT DINNER AFTER DARK SOMETIMES IN PLACES CALLED **RESTAURANTS**.

YES, I HEARD THAT SOMEWHERE, TOO, ACTUALLY.

HOW ABOUT YOU LET THE INBOX FEND FOR ITSELF THE REST OF THE EVENING?

ARE YOU DOING THE SAME?



WELL, I CAN'T PROMISE THAT IN THE WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING--LONG AFTER I'VE DROPPED YOU OFF--MY ATTENTION WILL NOT BE DIRECTED ELSEWHERE, BUT...

HONEST TO A FAULT.



SO, WHAT'S ALL THIS THEN?

BEEN A WHILE SINCE I TOLD YOU HOW MUCH YOU **MEAN** TO THIS CITY...TO ALFRED...TO ME...

...I THINK TONIGHT'S AS GOOD A NIGHT AS ANY TO DRINK A TOAST TO **OLD FRIENDS** WHO DON'T GET TOGETHER NEARLY AS OFTEN AS THEY SHOULD.

I COMPLETELY AGREE.

LEAD ON, BRUCE.













## AN OLD ENEMY RETURNS, AND A STRANGE NEW MYSTERY BEGINS!

A mysterious enemy who knows everything about Batman's history is pulling no punches. Clues take the form of disturbing reminders of the Dark Knight's darkest days, as he is forced to fight a losing battle to protect those who have been most important to his transformation from a scared little boy to Gotham's champion.

When interrogating his foes inside Arkham Asylum raises more questions than answers, Batman must depend on himself alone to discover the mastermind behind these challenges...a foe who has been part of Batman's life since the very beginning of his crime-fighting career!

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